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HISTORY OF PRUSSIA

BY

HERBERT TUTTLE



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HISTORY OF PRUSSIA
UNDER FREDERIC THE GREAT

1745—1756

BY

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FREDERIC THE GREAT.

CHAPTER I.

SOHR AND KESSELSDORF.

IN spite of this brilliant victory Frederic was not anxious for further fighting. He hoped, and perhaps believed, that the lesson administered at Hohenfriedberg would teach the Austrians the folly of all attempts to reconquer Silesia, and make them disposed to abandon a struggle, which he himself, since the death of Charles VII., had no further avowed motive for continuing. He has left on record the statement that he had only economical reasons for following prince Charles into Bohemia. He wished to support his army, during the negotiations for peace, in the enemy's country. But that negotiations for peace would at once begin and happily end, seems to have been his firm conviction. The crushing defeat in Silesia, he wrote to Podewils, must have softened the heart of Pharaoh.¹

The figure itself was a bold one, and the prediction to which it sought to give a picturesque dress proved singularly false. There were indeed other events besides her failure in Silesia which might at the time have been expected to shake the resolution of the queen. Ill-fortune had steadily attended the efforts of the allies west of the Rhine. One after another the great fortresses of the Austrian Netherlands had surrendered to Maurice; and Holland, thus threatened by the loss of the barrier defences, began seriously to count the

The war in
the Netherlands.

¹ Frederic to Podewils 6, 7, 10, 17, 18 June, 1745; *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 120, 121.

probable cost of further participation in the struggle. In Italy the Spaniards gained some advantages, and the king of Sardinia entered into secret negotiations with France. But on the Rhine the queen's generals, Traun and Batthyany, reported a signal military success, from which important political consequences were expected to follow. Toward the end of July prince Conti with the French was driven across the river; and, as the city of Frankfort then fell into the hands of the Austrians, a great influence over the coming imperial election was assured to the queen.¹ The labored efforts of France to win Saxony by the promise of the succession in the Empire were then abandoned as hopeless.

In the mean time England renewed her efforts to pacify Austria and Prussia. The arguments used at Maria Theresa still firm. Vienna were the old ones, that the pragmatic allies could make no headway against so many enemies; that some concessions were unavoidable; and that Frederic, as the most dangerous obstacle to success, ought to be conciliated at any reasonable price. In an interview with the queen, on the second of August, Robinson even hinted at the withdrawal of the English subsidies in case she continued obstinate. But these appeals made no impression, and a resolute refusal was returned. If she were sure of making peace with the king of Prussia the next morning, she would still give him battle that evening, said the undaunted princess.²

While Robinson was making these general representations, lord Harrington, who was at Hanover with Convention of Hanover. George II., again sounded Frederic about the terms of peace which he would be willing to have presented at Vienna. The king's demands varied with the

¹ D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, iii. 22, 25, admits Conti's incapacity, but says he had been weakened by the recall of 20,000 troops from his army for service in Flanders.

² Arneth, iii. 87-91; Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 213-215.

shifting phases of the situation. He first insisted on additional cessions of territory, or a war indemnity of one million pounds sterling.¹ Both schemes were promptly rejected by the English minister. But before the response reached the Prussian camp, Frederic had already dispatched a second letter, giving Andrié authority to accept the simple status quo as established by the treaty of 1742.² This proposition, which reached Hanover at the same time as orders for prince Leopold to march, and a manifesto against Saxony, was at once accepted by Harrington as a basis for negotiations, and on the twenty-sixth of August the preliminaries were signed. They took the form of a secret engagement on the part of England to use her best efforts to bring about the acceptance of the proposed terms by the queen of Hungary. Saxony was to be comprehended in the peace, and Frederic was to give his electoral vote to the grand-duke Francis.³

Both parties had reasons for the prompt conclusion of the protocol. Frederic saw himself left, after Conti's retreat, without allies in Germany, and was in some fear of a Russian intervention in Saxony's behalf. But the problem of money was even more urgent and difficult. Everything depended on the reply of Louis XV. to the request for subsidies; and the reply had been already so long delayed that the king's patience was nearly exhausted. The main reason, he wrote, which might compel him to accept the English mediation on unsatisfactory terms, would be the failure of France to replenish his purse.⁴ Since this was a confidential note from the king to his minister, it might be presumed to

¹ Frederic to Andrié, 5 August, 1745.

² The same to the same, 10 August, 1745; Droysen, V. ii. 534, 535. The manifesto, *Preuss. Staatsschriften*, i. 692-697, was published in Berlin on the 28th of August, 1745.

³ Wenck, ii. 181-194.

⁴ Frederic to Podewils, and to Chambrier, 21 July, 1745.

speaking the truth. Yet that it did not speak the whole truth, and that Frederic's conduct at this time was not free from duplicity, will appear from a comparison of two or three other dispatches. In an earlier instruction to his envoy at Paris, Frederic urges a prompt settlement of the subsidy matter; and then, alluding to reported suspicions in France that his policy was not straightforward and upright, states that, in order to remove every cause of inquietude from the minds of the French ministers, he had ordered the recall of his minister from London.¹ The truth is, however, that the recall of Andrié was only threatened, not carried out. The object, too, was not to give satisfaction to France, but to intimidate England; and it was expressly ordered that a secretary should be left in charge of the legation, who, if Harrington relented and showed himself more pliant, would be in a position to render the same services as the envoy himself.² Nor is it true, as intimated by one of Frederic's apologists,³ that the meagre pecuniary assistance offered by Louis led him to conclude with England. On the contrary he had himself communicated the terms on which he would agree to the English mediation, and those terms had been embodied in the treaty of Hanover, which he accepted, before the French response reached him. When it did reach him, and proved to offer only about one third of the four million thalers which he had demanded, he was of course greatly offended. Such a sum, he said, would better become a landgrave of Darmstadt than a king of Prussia.⁴ He declined therefore to receive anything, and thank-

¹ Frederic to Chambrier, 17 July, 1745.

² Frederic to Podewils, 8 July, 1745.

³ Carlyle, iv. 128, 129.

⁴ Frederic to Valori, 3 September, 1745. The treaty of Hanover was signed on the 26 August; on the 31st Frederic announces to Podewils his resolution to accept it; the offer of Louis XV. was not communicated to him until the second of September. Cf. Valori, i. 240.

fully accepted a loan advanced by the nobility of the mark of Brandenburg. With this he replenished his purse while awaiting the issue of the English mediation.

The general reasons which led England to support the proposed settlement were of course familiar to all the world. But at this juncture two motives, not called into action during the first Silesian war, operated powerfully to sharpen the zeal of the ministers of George the Second. They were, for one thing, anxious to save Saxony from the vengeance of Frederic. A less unselfish but far more convincing reason was the necessity of defending England against the Stuarts; for the designs of the young pretender, Charles Edward, long suspected, had at length matured in an actual landing on the coast of Scotland. The event instantly changed the military situation in the Netherlands. All the available British troops were at once recalled to England, and it became of the highest importance to have their places supplied by Austrian regiments. Hence the sudden and peculiar necessity for putting a speedy end to the war in Bohemia.

The young
pretender
lands in
Scotland.

The queen again refused to accept the English overtures. In a conversation with the indefatigable Robinson, who a few days later presented them, and warmly urged their adoption, she gave a cheerful account of the state of her affairs in Bohemia, and showed no disposition to yield. The concentration of Leopold's army had already been answered by a new and closer alliance between Austria and Saxony, signed on the twenty-ninth of August. It engaged both powers to employ all their forces against the king of Prussia; to carry the war into his territories; to make common cause in the diet of the Empire; to organize the German circles for the defence of the frontiers; and to act together in any negotiations for peace.¹

Rejection of
the English
propositions.

¹ Arneth, iv. 422-424. The stipulations were not in the form of a treaty, but of declarations exchanged between the two courts.

The queen's confidence in the strength of her position, and in the favorable outlook from Bohemia, was not without solid reasons. For three months there had been no serious fighting, and but little manœuvring. General Nassau, sent by Frederic with fifteen thousand men to drive the enemy from Upper Silesia, had conducted the movement with energy and partial success; on the fifth of September he recaptured the fortress of Cosel. But in Bohemia the rival armies lay for weeks inactive in a narrow valley near the junction of the Adler and the Elbe. The Austrians were at Königgrätz; the Prussians, across the Elbe at Chlum. Either position was unassailable, but otherwise that of the former was the stronger; for it was in direct communication with the interior of Bohemia, whence supplies could be drawn in abundance and safety, while Frederic, after exhausting the little food and forage which his own immediate neighborhood afforded, had to bring everything from Silesia. This was a costly, and at the same time an uncertain, source of supply. The trains had to traverse a hostile country, whose inhabitants were always ready to send warning to Nadasdy or Franquiny, or other active partisan, and whose natural conditions were favorable to the dashing tactics of the pandours. As the difficulties of convoy increased, provisions and other necessities became scarcer in the Prussian camp; privation brought on sickness; the Prussian numbers were steadily melting away.¹ The king had, besides, detached some regiments to reënforce Leopold, while the Austrians had received reënforcements, so that he was now considerably outnumbered. Want of supplies, the danger of his communications, the activity of the pandours, and the superiority of prince Charles, made it by the end of August unsafe for Frederic longer to postpone the retrograde movement.

The army fell back at first only over the Metau, where

¹ Arneth, iv. 93.

it formed a strong defensive camp in the angle between that river and the Elbe, Frederic's headquarters being at Semonitz. But little or nothing was gained by this movement. The Prussians were now only one march nearer their supplies, and the hostile cavalry harassed their outposts as persistently as before. On one occasion they nearly snatched up the marquis of Valori. He had taken lodgings in a suburb of Jaromirz, thoughtless apparently of danger, when, one evening early in September, a body of Hungarian hussars, guided by the son of his landlord, dashed into the place, surrounded the house, and demanded their prey. The stout envoy was saved only by the presence of mind of Darget, his secretary. Darget gave himself out for his master, and the troopers, having no time for investigation, carried him off as a prisoner, while Valori slept undiscovered in an adjoining room. Frederic thought this episode worthy a royal poem.¹

Retrograde
movement
of the Prus-
sians.

It had, however, its serious side. It was one of many incidents which soon made it clear that not even this line could be held, and that the retreat must be continued toward Silesia. The suspense about the fate of the Hanover treaty was unendurable. One could imagine, wrote the king at this time, what was passing in his soul, and in what a terrible situation he found himself placed. He had so many sources of chagrin, of embarrassment, and of disquietude, that he wondered how he sustained himself through them all.² He even made one more effort, the third, to learn from prince Charles whether, in connection with England's mediation,

Embarrass-
ment and
anxiety.

¹ Chant III. of the "Palladion," a poem wholly devoted to the adventures of Valori. *Œuvres de Frédéric*, vol. xi. But Valori meets this raillery with the observation that the affair was a disgrace to the Prussian guards; in fact, he says, Frederic's camp was never well guarded, because, on account of the frequency of desertions, he feared to push his pickets out too far. *Mémoires*, i. 241-245.

² Frederic to Podewils, 13 September, 1745.

he had not received orders for an armistice. The answer was a short and formal negative.¹

The political opportunities opened by the retreat of prince Conti were also promptly seized. All the electoral courts except Prussia and the Palatinate had already been gained, or were soon afterwards gained, by the Austrian agents; and in spite of the efforts of the representatives of the minority, first to exclude the vote of Bohemia, and then to postpone the day of the election, they were overruled on both points. Their solemn protest against the constitutionality of the proceedings was also disregarded. The college met on the thirteenth of September. Seven votes out of the nine were cast for the grand-duke of Tuscany; and at the coronation shortly afterwards Maria Theresa, who graced the occasion by her presence, saluted the triumph of her husband, Francis the First, emperor of Germany.

The new emperor was amiable, accomplished, intelligent, often singularly prompt and correct in his judgments, but wanting in energy and even the more robust kind of ambition. His private affairs he managed with a prudence not often found in princes of the blood. By wise investments, bold speculations, and skill at the gaming-table, he acquired an immense fortune, from which he was at times enabled to make opportune advances to the state. He was a favorite with ladies, and a leader in society. But he was too fond of ease, comfort, and a graceful repose to enter with much warmth into the strenuous excitement of politics; and he filled his place as husband of a reigning queen with excellent tact, reserve, and discretion. For himself he would probably have

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, iv. 280 n.; Droysen, V. ii. 552. I can find in Frederic's confidential correspondence with Podewils and others no justification for the charge in Coxe's *H. of A.*, iii. 319, and Arneth, iii. 112, that he was pursuing a double policy, and did not really desire peace. The whole tenor of his letters contradicts this theory.

made no very earnest efforts to acquire the imperial dignity. His election was the work and the triumph of Maria Theresa. She valued it perhaps not the less as compliment to her husband than for the prestige which it brought to herself and her house ; but without her energy, resolution, and practical sagacity it would never have been effected.

Not the least of the obstacles which she had to surmount, or rather defy, was the danger that precipitate action might compromise the position Attitude of George II. of her ally, the king of England. He had procured the promise of Prussia's vote for the grand-duke on the condition that he previously procure the queen's assent to the proposed treaty of peace. This engagement he had taken not only as king of England, but also — on Frederic's express demand — as elector of Hanover ; and it was no very violent inference from the spirit of the treaty that the vote of Hanover was also to be made subject to the same condition. It might have been foreseen that Frederic would interpret rigidly the promise of England to use her best efforts to obtain the queen's assent. The most effectual means of coercion were temporarily to withhold Hanover's vote, and to suspend the payment of the English subsidies. The failure to use these powerful weapons would be sure to excite the suspicions of Prussia, and perhaps lead to disastrous consequences. Thus, even had the queen been sure of England's eventual support of her candidate, she might well have reflected whether it was expedient to press the election in a way which could seriously embarrass her leading ally and supporter. She was not ignorant of the dilemma in which England and Hanover were involved. At Vienna, before her departure, and at Frankfort, whither he had followed her, Robinson omitted no opportunity to press the subject of the treaty, and to wrestle with her invincible prejudices. Yet Maria Theresa proceeded with the utmost confidence to the election and the coronation. The

vote of Hanover was not withheld, and the English subsidies were not withdrawn.

This confidence of the queen, so far as it was not a part of her own indomitable spirit, rested on a clear perception of the change which was taking place in the relations of the leading powers. The original positions, at least of Austria and England, had now become nearly reversed. The death of Charles VII., the peace of Füssen, the adhesion of a number of German princes, formerly hos-^{Austria and England.}tile or doubtful, to the Hapsburg cause, had in spite of some military checks vastly improved the queen's situation, and made her less dependent than before on the alliance of England. It was notorious that France desired peace with Austria. At any time after the defection of Prussia in 1742, Louis would probably have been glad to purchase a retreat from the struggle by surrendering every foot of Austrian territory held by his troops. And even the renewed intervention of Prussia in 1744 only temporarily relieved the solicitude of the court of Versailles, for the dangerous pretext which the death of Charles VII. offered to Frederic's unscrupulousness was perfectly understood. The general situation in 1745 was thus vastly different from that of 1742.

In exact proportion to the decline of Austria's active interest in the war, rose, on the contrary, the interest of England. The fact that the struggle in the Netherlands had outgrown the original dimensions of the pragmatic war, and become in a broader sense a battle for empire in the old world and in the new, had been daily growing plainer. In this battle England was a principal and Austria only an ally.¹ To such an ally English diplomacy could not speak in the tone of authority which the situation of the queen's affairs in the first Silesian war compelled her to hear. It was expedient to respect her

¹ Nearly Maria Theresa's own words to Robinson. Report of the latter, 27 April, 1744, in Raumer, *Beitrag*, ii. 206.

relatively improved position, and to treat her prejudices with forbearance. This had been expedient even when, England's own interests seemed to be confined to the Netherlands, but was of course vitally important at a moment when Charles Edward was rallying the clans in the Highlands, seizing the city of Edinburgh, and getting ready to lead his fanatical host down into the plains of Lancashire. It was folly to suppose that at such a crisis the English statesmen would risk their own interests with the queen by an offensively arrogant support of the interests of Prussia. It was not so much now a question between the relative prospects of Prussia and Austria as between the diverging aims of the allied courts of London and Vienna. For the moment, each proceeded to pursue its own immediate end. England prepared to expel the pretender from her territory. Austria formed elaborate plans for recovering Silesia, and even dismembering the Prussian state.¹

The fact that the Austrian party thus proceeded to the imperial election without the aid of Prussia is conclusive proof that they were unwilling, and thought it unnecessary, to pay the price at which that aid had been offered. It is true that the failure of the English mediation had not been formally announced. In spite of the refusal of prince Charles to suspend hostilities, the unsatisfactory responses made from Hanover to all inquiries, the sensational rumors from St. Petersburg, and other suspicious circumstances, the king, whose anxiety rose with every day that he remained in Bohemia, still clung to the hope of a pacification. But he relaxed none of his military precautions. Leopold of Dessau, whose march into Saxony had been suspended, to his great chagrin, on the conclusion of the preliminaries of Hanover, was still held in readiness for

Frederic
still hopes
for peace.

¹ The justice of such considerations was practically admitted by Frederic himself many years later. *Œuvres*, iii. 147.

any emergency. He was ill satisfied at not being permitted to blow the trumpet of Sodom in the fields of Saxony.¹ Nor was Frederic any better pleased with the prospects of his own army in Bohemia.

On the eighteenth of September, while the guns of prince Charles were firing salutes in honor of the imperial election, the Prussians continued their retreat, crossed the Elbe, and took up a new position between that stream and the Aupa. The king's headquarters were at Staudenz. Here he hoped to find subsistence for ten days or a fortnight; after which, if no satisfactory news was heard from Hanover, he would retire into Silesia. Orders were actually issued to prepare for this eventual movement.² But the Prussian retreat, being a confession of weakness, only emboldened the enemy, and taught the pandours new lessons of enterprise and audacity. Not content with picking up outposts or interrupting provision trains, they even penetrated the Prussian lines, and on one of their boldest expeditions burned the village of Trautenau, where Frederic had a field bakery and a dépôt of flour. The unfortunate Valori was again a victim. His house was burned over his head, and, discouraged by repeated misfortunes, he finally joined a military convoy, which escorted him safely to Breslau.³ The exploits of the enemy's horse, and the exhaustion of the region, compelled the Prussians to fall back to the next stage in the homeward course. This would bring the headquarters to the town of Schatzlar. But an unexpected report brought in by a deserter suddenly changed this plan. The Austrians, whom the king,

The retreat continued.

¹ Frederic to Rothenburg, 16 September, 1745.

² Frederic to Munchow, 20 September, to Podewils, 25 September, 1745.

³ "Le gros Valory, que les Autrichiens ont manqué d'enlever à Jaromirz, a manqué d'être brûlé à Trautenau, il est dégoûté pour sa vie de la Bohême, il est parti pour Breslau, sans rien dire à personne." Frederic to Podewils, 26 September, 1745. Cf. Valori, i. 246.

intent mainly on his own retreat, and perhaps underestimating the energy of prince Charles, had not closely watched, were on the march down the Elbe. On the twenty-ninth of September their vanguard was at Arnau, opposite Trautenau, and farther north even than the king himself. Their evident design was to intercept the Prussian retreat to Schatzlar. The situation was critical.

For several weeks the queen had been urging prince Charles to take the offensive, to annihilate the army of Frederic, to reconquer Silesia, and end the war. His plea of inadequate strength had been answered by reënforcements. Two of the most experienced of the Austrian generals, prince Lobkowitz and the duke of Ahremberg, were sent to give him counsel, and stimulate his energy. These representations and measures, which were followed at last by positive orders,¹ left him no further excuse for inaction; and he was now in close pursuit of the foe.

The movement had, however, a broader significance than the mere desire to intercept and defeat the single army of Frederic. It was part of a comprehensive plan of action, which had been contemplated in the original alliance with Saxony, had been more definitely formed in subsequent councils of war, was encouraged by the favorable outlook of secret negotiations with France, and had even received in a measure the sanction of Russia. England had indeed practically withdrawn, by the treaty of Hanover, from this ambitious combination. With the defection of England, and the loss of any expected English subsidies for such an object, fell of course the hopes of an active participation by Russia. But while the irritation of Elizabeth against Prussia was growing keener, the Austrian court had labored, not without success, to cultivate closer relations with the empress of the north; had become reassured about her purpose to

Prince
Charles in
pursuit.

Austrian
plans.

¹ Arneth, iii. 111.

defend Saxony against attack; and obtained a reassertion of the ingenious Russian fiction that August could assist Austria in Silesia without giving Frederic the right to treat him as a belligerent.¹ The tendency of opinion at St. Petersburg seemed to justify schemes which, in the minds of the more sanguine partisans of the queen, took the most fantastic and extravagant shapes.² Silesia would be recovered; Saxony would be rewarded from the hereditary dominions of Frederic; and Prussia would be reduced to the rank of a weak and harmless principality. The Austrian ambassador at St. Petersburg boasted openly of the auspicious campaign, which was soon to begin.³ This was reported by Mardefeld, and, though treated as overdrawn, was admitted to call for the exercise of the greatest prudence.

It was in accordance with these inviting plans, and in obedience to the empress-queen's urgent instructions, that prince Charles left his strong position at Königgrätz, and, under cover of his adventurous cavalry, endeavored to cut off the Prussian retreat. He had now planted himself nearly across the path of Frederic. The subsequent manœuvres, which finally led to an engagement, may conveniently be described from two stand-points, the Austrian and the Prussian.

The Prussian retreat intercepted.

Movements of the Austrians.

It appears from Austrian accounts that, as early as the twenty-third of September, Nadasdy reported the occupation of the heights of Marschau, from which the Prussian camp at Staudenz could be seen. The next day prince Charles, accompanied by Lobkowitz and Ahremberg, ascended the hill, and enjoyed the same inspiring scene. It was agreed that the Prus-

¹ Arneth, iii. 138.

² Arneth, iii. 137, admits that these had a certain justification in the queen's assurances to Saxony.

³ Droysen, V. ii. 546 n.

sians could be taken by surprise and defeated. Two days elapsed, and then another visit was made to the heights, and the same conclusion drawn. Still no attack was made. Another day apparently intervened, which the Austrians occupied in shifting their position toward Königshof. The next day, the twenty-ninth, they might, by breaking camp early, have reached the enemy's front, and given attack with every advantage of time and position. But they waited until afternoon, then took position at and about the village of Sohr, and postponed the decisive assault until the next day.¹

In the Prussian camp there was less exact information, but more energy. On the receipt of news that the Austrian army was in the neighborhood, ^{Of the Prussians.} Frederic at once changed his plans. It was seen to be hazardous to make a delay of twenty-four hours in order to send out foraging parties to capture hay-stacks and grain-bins, as had been originally planned; and the order was therefore issued to break camp on the thirtieth, and continue the retreat while the lines were still open. The line of retreat was, however, in fact no longer open. While Frederic was at breakfast the startling news was brought in that the enemy, having seized the heights of Burkersdorf, disputed the further progress of the Prussians. The king had been ill served by his scouts. What they had reported as merely the movement of small bodies of Austrians proved to be a concentration of the entire army of prince Charles, in an advantageous position, and with a great superiority of numbers. The position had been chosen for attack, and an attack with every prospect of success. But the prince's usual procrastination allowed the opportunity to pass, and he suddenly found himself with an army of thirty-five thousand men defending him-

¹ Arneth, iii. 113, 114; Orlich, ii. 226, 227. The excuse for this postponement was that some of the infantry regiments lost their way, and did not reach their assigned positions until late in the evening.

self against an army of nineteen thousand.¹ For Frederic, with instinctive foresight, decided at once that he could save himself only by taking the offensive, and trusting to the valor and discipline of his troops to repair the discrepancy of numbers.²

The Austrians were drawn up in an order of battle three lines deep, with a battery of twenty-eight guns somewhat in advance of their left centre. In the face of the fire of this battery the Prussians were compelled to make their formation. The cannonade was terrific, and the slaughter great. But the pedantic rules of the military art, as then understood, required the construction of a line of battle before the battle itself could be opened. As soon as this was completed the Prussians began active work. On the extreme left of the Austrians stood regiments of horse, which ought to have charged while the Prussians were forming, if indeed they did not charge and meet a repulse, for on this point there is a singular obscurity.³ But in any event it is agreed that the first effective blow was struck by the Prussian cuirassiers. Under generals Goltz and Katzeler they hurled themselves with irresistible force against the Austrian horse and swept them back upon the second line, which also broke; the third line was likewise carried away by the shock; and the enemy fled in disorder from that part of the field. This was an auspicious opening, and it had

Battle of
Sohr, 30
September,
1745.

¹ The prince's excuse was that a thick fog prevented a clear view of the Prussian camp, but Arneth, iii. 116, pertinently observes that this fog did not prevent the Prussians from seeing him! Orlich, ii. 234, gives somewhat larger figures for the Prussians, but he appears to include some troops which were not engaged.

² *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 137.

³ Arneth, iii. 117, and other Austrian authorities assert that such an unsuccessful charge was made under count Kolowrat; and Droysen, V. ii. 559 n., finds a hint to that effect in the report of prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. But Frederic's own accounts contain no mention of such a movement.

an important tactical consequence. It enabled Frederic next to send his infantry forward against the batteries without any danger from a flank attack. But the movement was still difficult and desperate. The brave battalions had to climb a sharp hill in the very face of the deadly guns, supported as they were by the flower of the Austrian foot; great furrows were ploughed in their ranks; one general after another fell before the eyes of his troops. Yet they pressed steadily onward until they came within range, and opened their own fire. This was delivered with the usual precision of the Prussian infantry; but the odds were still great, and at one moment it looked as if these heroic efforts were to be in vain. The Prussians wavered, then fell back, and the Austrian infantry sprang upon them with shouts of triumph. But five fresh battalions—all that were available—were sent forward from the second line, and with this timely support the retreat was checked, the line reformed, the Austrians in turn pressed back, and by a final onslaught the batteries at length overpowered. Such guns as had not been removed to the rear were captured, and the whole left of the Austrians was thus completely broken.

While Frederic was executing this bloody programme on his right, he had refused his left, which stood ready for action, but inactive. It was now put in motion. The Austrians advanced from their centre as if to seize the village of Burkersdorf, which was defended only by two battalions. It was therefore put to the flames by the king's directions, in order that it might not afford shelter to the enemy; and at the same time the Prussian left, emulous of the success of their comrades of the right, advanced into action. The extreme right of the Austrians near Prausnitz made no resistance, for the regiments refused to follow their officers.¹ But about prince

¹ Arneth, iii. 117, names three regiments which could not be brought to charge.

Charles' centre there was some stubborn fighting, and heavy losses. There was a battery here also to be stormed, though its guns were few and of light calibre; there were stout battalions, which held their ground desperately, and, as they were forced back, rallied again on every line of knolls; there was one hill which Ferdinand of Brunswick carried only after a bloody hand-to-hand fight at the bayonet's point against a body of Austrians commanded by prince Louis of Brunswick, his own brother.¹ But the tenacity of the Prussians in the end prevailed. Two thousand Austrians were cut off and made prisoners. The rest sought refuge in the woods, and by eleven o'clock the struggle was ended. The Prussians advanced to the village of Sohr, from which the battle takes its name, and the occupation of which was a practical assertion of the victory. It was impossible, or at least unsafe, to follow the enemy into the recesses of the forest of the kingdom, whither they retreated.²

It had been part of prince Charles' plan for Nadasdy, who with his irregulars had made a wide detour around Frederic's position the day before, to coöperate in the battle by an attack in the rear. But when his wild horsemen reached the Prussian camp, which had been left unguarded, the instinct of plunder proved too strong. They made a prisoner of Eichel, the secretary, though he succeeded in destroying the most important papers; seized all the king's camp baggage; burned what they could not carry off; and, according to common report, cruelly mistreated the helpless soldiers whom they found in the field hospital. But by this delay they lost the opportunity for better service. General Lehwaldt

The Prussian camp
plundered.

¹ Cf. Mauvillon, *Geschichte Ferdinands, Herzogs von Braunschweig-Lüneburg*, Leipsic, 1794, i. 129 et seq.

² *Sylva du Royaume*. Frederic makes sad work with this poetically named forest. In one place he calls it the *Royaume de Silva*, and afterwards, by a curious tautology, *la forêt de Silva*.

with his division had been sent forward to Trautenau, a day or two before, to hold open the route to Silesia. As soon as he heard the sound of cannon he promptly turned back, and, although he arrived too late to take part in the battle, he at least opportunely thwarted the completion of Nadasdy's enterprise. When his vanguard appeared on the heights above the pillaged camp, the pandours promptly took to flight.¹ The raid caused not the less serious embarrassment. Frederic, robbed of Eichel, had to depend on his officers for camp accommodations, to act as his own secretary, to write to Podewils for a new cipher, and to order duplicate books from his old tutor. The list of books thus demanded will give a good idea of the literary equipment with which the king of Prussia entered on a campaign. He ordered, among other works, Boileau and Bossuet; Cicero, Lucian, and Horace in French translations; Voltaire and Rousseau; the poems of Gresset, the campaigns of Turenne, and the Persian Letters of Montesquieu.²

For the length of its duration, and the numbers engaged, this action was unusually bloody. The Prussians lost in killed and wounded over three ^{The losses.} thousand officers and men; among the killed were general Blankensee, prince Albert of Brunswick, a colonel in Frederic's service, five other colonels, and two lieutenant-colonels. The Austrians estimated their own loss at nearly seven thousand five hundred men, of whom three thousand were taken prisoners, nineteen pieces of cannon, and eight flags.³

¹ Cogniazo, *Geständnisse*, ii. 150, defends Nadasdy against the harsh censure, of which he was the object, by the observation that his wild horsemen ought not to be tried by a standard which is applicable only to regular troops. Less conclusive is the further assertion that Nadasdy performed a real service by detaining Lehwaldt; it does not appear that the latter could in any event have reached the field in time to take part in the battle.

² Frederic to Duhan, 2 October, 1745.

³ The *Oesterreichische Mil. Zeitschrift* for 1825, quoted by Droysen, V. ii. 564 n., gives a total loss of 7,485 men, including 3,138 prisoners

The king promptly reported the victory to Berlin in terms of just exultation. The battle, he said, was terrible, but glorious; many prisoners were taken; in a word, it was a great affair. Writing three days later a fuller account, he confessed more frankly that by his careless generalship he had suffered himself to be surprised, and had narrowly escaped an overwhelming disaster.¹ Finally, in his history, as revised just before his death, he takes a still more modest and critical attitude; reviews his own faults with no little severity; and even admits some qualification of the advantage, which numbers and position seemed at a hasty glance to give to the enemy. It was the king's capital mistake, according to his own confession, that he allowed himself to be surprised in a narrow defile, whence he could not escape without fighting, and where he could not fight except at great disadvantage, against an enemy superior in force and more favorably placed. But he then adds that the formation of the country was really an advantage to him, and explained in part why he gained the battle. The troops of prince Charles were posted in such uneven, rocky, and contracted ground that they could not easily be manœuvred; while, as the Prussians could always oppose a front equal to the fighting line of the prince, his excess of numbers was no practical advantage, if it were not even a positive disadvantage.² But these concessions, however creditable to the candor of the royal historian, will doubtless appear somewhat strained

Frederic's
account of
the battle.

¹ Frederic to Podewils, 30 September, 1745. Same to same, 3 October, 1745.

² *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 140, 141. The earlier version of the "Histoire de mon temps" says more explicitly, "Cette multitude de soldats devenait inutile au prince de Lorraine, pressés les uns sur les autres, en tant de lignes, sans distance, et sans la faculté de se mouvoir, ce qui communiquait la confusion à toute l'armée." Cogniazo, ii. 146, 147, thinks that the prince might have extended his cavalry farther on his left, and thus overlapped the Prussian right.

and affected. It cannot be denied that the movements which brought the Prussian army into this critical position were strategically false. But it is not necessary to admit that the bad disposition of his forces by prince Charles made him really inferior in fighting strength, for everything shows that Frederic's tactics were excellent, that his troops fought like lions, and that it was a clear case of a battle gained over a superior army by courage, discipline, and generalship. It seems at most only probable that a badly chosen position made the prince's superiority of numbers less effective than a mere statement of the figures would indicate.

The question then still remains, why were the Austrians defeated, not only on this occasion, but in all the battles of the two Silesian wars? At Mollwitz ^{Austrian} ill-fortune. and Chotusitz they were equal, at Hohenfriedberg and Sohr superior in numbers. They had a tactical advantage of position at Hohenfriedberg and Sohr, and no disadvantage on the other two fields. They were fighting in defence of their own country, and among a friendly people, while the Prussians were fighting for conquest in the midst of an alien and hostile population. Besides their regular troops, which in all the campaigns were at least not less numerous than those of the enemy, they had a large body of irregular horse, which for some purposes were singularly efficient. Their generals had, at the outset of the war, all the advantage which comes from recent service and practical experience. Their uniform defeat in battle is, therefore, one of the great problems of military history.

It would be, of course, presumptuous in a layman to attempt to solve this problem. But some observations may be made, which will perhaps suggest a clue to the solution.

The older and more experienced officers in the service of the empress-queen seem to have passed, during the

period now under review, from the extreme which is represented by excessive confidence to the extreme which is represented by excessive prudence. In both campaigns of the first war they underestimated the foe, and were severely punished for their mistake. But in the second war the officers showed rather a lack of confidence in themselves, or their troops, or both. For, although the diplomatic and military projects of the court of Vienna were as ambitious and arrogant as ever, Traun and prince Charles hesitated to give battle, manœuvred tediously for tactical advantage, and perhaps impaired the morale of their men by the example of their own caution. They exchanged the weakness which comes from rash and presumptuous folly for the weakness which is the child of hesitation, anxiety, and doubt. The Austrian armies wanted, again, that unity of direction which was so conspicuously present in those of Frederic. Instead of having one single leader, who to the authority of a general added the authority of a king, and who was personally present in the campaigns, the Austrians present the spectacle of good officers and bad officers subject alike to the commands of a distant ruler of the female sex. She set them indeed an example of courage and enthusiasm, and had a quite remarkable degree of military insight. But she was ignorant of the rules and conditions of strategy, and often insisted on measures which went beyond the capacity of her commanders, or which were made difficult by practical circumstances. Their punishment for neglecting favorable moments for action was not infrequently a peremptory order from their impatient mistress, practically requiring them to act when the moment was unfavorable, or even clearly dangerous. The evils of such a system need, of course, no explanation. It is beyond doubt, too, that favoritism prevailed to a vicious extent in the selection of the Austrian commanders; that court influence was often more useful to an

ambitious officer than the longest service, or the clearest record; and that the queen's amiable desire to see her husband and brother-in-law distinguish themselves in the field of arms was gratified at the cost of the true interest of the state. And finally, as to details, it is notorious that in equipment, weapons, discipline, and organization the Austrian service was far inferior to that against which it had to contend.

These were serious disadvantages. But the uniform Prussian victories would still not be sufficiently explained if the fact were not added that the king of Prussia was a man of genius, endowed by nature with many of the gifts of a great commander. I should not myself enumerate among those gifts an instinctive talent for strategy. There was not a campaign in these two wars, either in 1741 or 1742, in 1744 or 1745, in which he did not commit the grossest errors, such as ought, on all military calculations, to have brought inevitable disaster. The only battle up to this time, the antecedent movements of which were not distinctly unwise, was that of Hohenfriedberg; and even then they were extremely hazardous, marked rather by the recklessness of a dashing soldier than by the prudence of a trained general. It is indeed the opinion of some critics that Frederic never became a good strategist. But his tactics steadily improved from the battle of Mollwitz to the battle of Sohr. A diligent student, knowing how to learn from experience, always ready to confess his errors, he slowly acquired in the art of fighting battles an aptitude, which gave him the first place among the generals of the age.

The question may now be asked why Frederic's natural gifts made him a good tactician rather than a good strategist? Why could he fight a brilliant battle, yet not plan a safe campaign? The reason for this distinction will appear after a comparison of the king's peculiar talents with those required respectively for strategy and for tactics.

Strategy and
tactics.

The conception and execution of a campaign mainly strategical require the power of elaborate and involved combinations, geographical, moral, and often political; the capacity to foresee, and to utilize or avoid, remote contingencies; the ability to master details each by itself, or to unite them in a consecutive and harmonious chain; and it is evident that this faculty may coexist with a very inferior order of actual fighting talent. The man who wins battles may also be a fine strategist, and that combination gives, of course, the highest type of general. But he may also be a soldier who wants the more scientific power of strategy, and who, in consequence of that want, may be compelled to trust to fortune for his opportunities, or often to give battle in circumstances which he has not controlled, and which are highly unfavorable. Such a situation calls into exercise the talents of the mere tactician. He must have a quick eye, prompt judgment, firm nerves; he must calculate risks with an utter disregard of personal consequences; he must be fertile in meeting sudden emergencies; he must have confidence in himself. Men thus endowed have won the name of great generals by mere skill in cutting their way through obstacles, which a wiser strategy would have avoided.

Now the texture and quality of Frederic's mind fitted him especially, if not exclusively, for the part of a fighting general on the field of battle. To all the various spheres of intellectual interest to which he applied himself, he brought readiness rather than profundity; quickness of apprehension, rather than power of comprehension; a versatile and superficial facility, rather than the capacity of prolonged, patient, and exhaustive investigation. In diplomacy he shows, at least in this early period, not so much a clear and consistent policy, carefully thought out and fenced around against defeat by prudent combinations, as an audacious confidence, seldom indeed disappointed, in his ability to live

Frederic
a great
tactician.

from day to day without securities, trusting to his wits to meet every crisis as it should arise. In domestic politics he adopted separate measures with a ready and often surprisingly accurate judgment, but these measures did not always coöperate harmoniously toward the success of a general scheme of reform. He touched lightly and gracefully many branches of literature, but he was neither a great poet, nor a great historian, nor a great critic. And so in war. His campaigns were often badly planned, his strategy deplorable. If he had been opposed by troops as good as his own, and by generals as enterprising as himself, he would have lost nearly every battle of the Silesian wars, because the strategical advantages were nearly always against him. But the defects of the strategist he repaired by the skill of the tactician. His mind, apparently despising the slow precautions of foresight and preparation, was roused to irresistible activity by the actual presence of difficulties, which his own negligence had perhaps raised about him. He seized the points of a situation with marvellous sagacity. No risks were more costly than surrender; no defeat so humiliating as one which had to be accepted without a struggle. His conduct at many great crises resembles that of an enraged tiger, who, surrounded by his exultant foes, coolly surveys the situation, and then, gathering his energies, springs with magnificent courage upon some part of the circle, and triumphantly fights his way to freedom. This was the class of tactics in which Frederic's talents were most brilliantly displayed. It was his conduct of a battle, not of a campaign, his demeanor in the face of the enemy, not his skill in the creation of favorable conditions, that gives him the name of a great general.

These reflections will, perhaps, make it clear why such a brilliant general was often led into campaigns that nearly ended in disaster, and, conversely, how he succeeded in extricating himself so skilfully from situations which

threatened to prove fatal. They explain, too, why his most striking battles might leave him strategically little stronger than he was before.

The battle of Sohr was one to which this description applies. It secured Frederic a safe route back to Silesia, but that was all. Prince Charles returned to the unassailable position that he had just vacated; while Frederic, making no attempt to follow up his victory, sat quietly down at Sohr a few days, and then, molested only by pandours, proceeded by easy marches, eating out the country as he went, to Silesia. Here his army was distributed in winter quarters.

Nor were any favorable moral effects from the victory at once apparent. The news of the disaster to her arms reached Maria Theresa at Frankfort about the time, if not on the very day, of her husband's coronation as emperor; and Robinson was promptly at hand to point the inevitable moral. He even insisted on an implied promise made by her in August that by October, if her affairs had made no progress, she would consent to peace with Frederic as advised by England. But she rejected this interpretation of her words, as she denied the force of all the other considerations offered by the envoy. She was determined to continue the struggle. No sacrifice which she could make would be so great, she assured Robinson, as that of leaving Silesia in the hands of the king of Prussia.¹

Yet this obstinacy was perhaps not so ill-calculated as a first view might suggest. For the bluntness and vehemence of Robinson's own appeals, which gave personal offence, and led to a demand for his recall, not only wanted for their support the evidence of an unalterable determination on the part of the English ministers, but were even practically discredited by the

¹ Arneth, iii. 122-125; Coxe, *H. of A.*, iii. 318; Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 214.

The Prussians retire to Silesia.

Maria Theresa still defiant.

Dupherty of George II.

secret policy of the Hanoverian agents. The hostility of George the Second to Prussia was known at the time. The efforts of his own diplomacy to defeat that of his English ministers were suspected. But since the annexation of Hanover, and the acquisition of its archives by Prussia, historical students have been enabled to work up a very damaging case against George; to show how the secret policy of the elector traversed the ostensible policy of the king; and to expose in all its features the mixture of greed, timidity, and malice which characterized his relations to Frederic.¹ The discredit cast upon the Hanoverian policy by Carteret changed only the king's methods, not his views. These remained the same; and in no transaction were his Hanoverian resources used more unscrupulously to thwart the measures to which his English ministers had forced him to give an outward assent, than in the mediation of 1745.

The queen was also perhaps encouraged to take this attitude by reflection upon the effect which was expected to follow the recent malicious publication of the text of the treaty of Hanover. It had been communicated by Robinson to the queen's ministers in strict confidence, and with a solemn demand for secrecy; but when they insisted with some justice that Saxony, as the ally of Austria, and a power included in the proposed peace, ought also to be consulted, consent was understood to be given for the dispatch of a copy to Dresden.² And shortly before the battle of Sohr the Saxon court gave it to the world. The object of the publication was of course to embarrass Frederic's relations with France, and to further the efforts which count Brühl was making for a separate peace between Louis and Maria Theresa. To such an end the measure seemed not ill-

Publication
of the con-
vention of
Hanover.

¹ Droysen, *Gesch. d. pr. Politik*, V. ii. passim; E. Borkowsky, *Die englische Friedensvermittlung im Jahre 1745*, Berlin, 1884, passim.

² Arneth, iv. 92, 93.

adapted. But Frederic took the view, suggested by Podewils, that the publication might really prove of service to Prussia by making all Europe a witness, as it were, to England's pledges, and thus giving them an increased solemnity.¹ He instructed Podewils to confess the truth. He even wrote an autograph letter to the king of France boldly acknowledging the treaty as authentic, but explaining with even greater boldness that it was only the first step in a general scheme of pacification. The reply of Louis was decorous in form, but between the lines was a strain of caustic irony not difficult to detect.²

In spite, however, of the treachery of the Saxon court, and the intrigues of George's secret agents, the Ratification by England. English government ratified the treaty of Hanover, and thereby acknowledged in conclusive form the obligation to labor for its acceptance by the queen. But of this fact Frederic had, before the battle, no information. On the contrary, his inveterate distrust of the good faith of others was revealed during the month of September in almost daily communications to Podewils and Andrié. At last his repeated hints of probable duplicity on the part of England culminated in orders to the latter to demand a categorical answer from the English ministers in regard to their attitude toward the treaty, and the measures which they proposed to adopt for forcing it upon the queen.³ But lord Harrington and Andrié were actually exchanging ratifications at the time that this peremptory communica-

¹ Frederic to Podewils, 26 September, 1745.

² Frederic to Louis XV., 15 November, 1745. Louis' reply in *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 173, 174. With Frederic's explanation of his separate negotiation may be compared an earlier letter, in which, speaking of the probable acceptance of the treaty of Hanover by the queen, he says: "notre paix faite, la Flandre, le Brabant, et l'Italie restent aux Autrichiens comme un prix pour lequel il faut se battre pour le ravoir. Ainsi la guerre se perpetua. . . En attendant nous jouirons de la paix." Frederic to Podewils, 13 October, 1745.

³ Frederic to Andrié, 23 September, 1745.

tion left the Prussian headquarters at Staudenz. It was apparently not until the tenth of October that Frederic learned this fact, and then it filled him with exultation. It was the best piece of news, he wrote, that he had received for a fortnight.

The reasons for this enthusiasm were, however, reached by a line of reflection which, though adopted in many letters, proved in the end to be grossly deceptive. The opinion of the king seems to have been that, if the queen should still refuse to accept the proposed pacification, England was bound to withdraw the subsidies, and even to enforce by military aid the guaranty of the cession of Silesia. After the receipt of the ratification of the treaty of Hanover, he even spoke of pecuniary assistance to be furnished from the British treasury.¹

The finances of Prussia were indeed in a distressing condition. The treasury was empty, and in despair the king groped fiercely about in every direction for relief. The plan of obtaining subsidies from England was apparently not urged with great seriousness, for the folly of expecting a power which was aiding the purse of Austria to aid also the purse of Austria's enemy was obvious. The next project was for a loan in England by permission of the British government, and in a certain sense under its auspices.² But this, too, seems to have led to nothing. The king even so far suppressed his resentment as to apply again to France for aid.³ A direct answer was evaded; but when the piquant reply of Louis to Frederic's letter, which he himself describes as pathetic,

Financial
embarrass-
ment.

¹ Frederic to Podewils, 10 October, to Andrié, 23 October, 1745.

² Frederic to Andrié, 9 November, 1745.

³ The same to Podewils, 26 September, to Chambrier, 26 September, and 11 October, 1745. It is noteworthy that, in the first of these letters to Chambrier, the king rejects, as not to the purpose, the proposed augmentation of the French active armies, although this was a measure which he himself had always warmly urged.

of the fifteenth of November, was received, all hope of assistance from this quarter was at once abandoned.

Another embarrassment arose at this time from the diplomatic attitude of Russia. In October the vice-chancellor, Woronzof, who in the Russian councils was usually favorable to Prussia, received leave of absence to travel for his health, and his departure, whether the nominal reason was or was not the true one, left Bestuschef in full control. Woronzof passed through Berlin. Labored attentions were shown to him there ;¹ but, while he was himself conciliatory, he frankly confessed that his court would not permit Prussia to retaliate upon Saxony so long as the operations of the Saxon auxiliary corps were confined to Silesia.² His words received the next day an emphatic confirmation. On the fourth of November the Russian envoy at Berlin handed Podewils a formal note from his government, which, after recalling earlier warnings to the same effect, announced in somewhat peremptory style that if Saxony were attacked the empress would regard the occasion as one which required her to furnish the stipulated military aid to August.³ The plan, according to indirect reports from St. Petersburg, was to push a Russian corps by way of Courland into the province of Preussen. The sagacious Mardefeld, to whom these plans were known, dismissed them as not worth serious attention. The regiments, he said, were not full ; there was no money ; the empress would not go beyond a mere diplomatic demonstration.⁴ But Frederic did not wholly share this optimism, and by his orders the reply to the Russian note, while evasive as to substance, was made courteous and conciliatory in tone.⁵

¹ "Il faut se surpasser à son égard en politesses et civilités." Frederic to Podewils, 29 October, 1745.

² Droysen, V. ii. 584, 585.

³ Droysen, V. ii. 583. The declaration, Adelung, v. 190, 191.

⁴ *Pr. Satatsschriften*, i. 709 ; Mardefeld to Frederic, 30 October, 1745.

⁵ Marginal comment on the above dispatch. Frederic excused him-

The Prussian case against Saxony had considerable strength. Unless the forced march through ^{Prussia and Saxony.} Saxon territory in 1744 be so pronounced, — and for that a certain technical excuse was put forward, — Frederic had given no pretext for the hostile policy of the court of Dresden, and had treated the principality with the greatest forbearance even after it had sent troops to shoot down his men at Hohenfriedberg. The treaty engagements and the military plans of his allied enemies went, on the other hand, far beyond the recovery of Silesia, and therefore far beyond the measures which, on the Russian theory, might lawfully be taken without giving Prussia a *casus belli* against Saxony. But of this fact Elizabeth, and perhaps even Bestuschef, was still apparently ignorant. It is uncertain even when they became informed about a new offensive campaign, planned between the allies with the greatest secrecy, aimed directly at the capital itself of Prussia, and, until suddenly checked on the field of battle, carried into execution with surprising vigor.

Early in November the Austrian general Grünne, with ten thousand men detached from the army of Traun on the Rhine, struck across Germany to-
New move-
ments of the
enemy.
 ward the northeast, until he reached Gera, near the Saxon frontier. Here for a time he halted. His ultimate destination was a profound mystery. At the same time, signs of movement were reported in the army of prince Charles. Winterfeld, who was guarding the approaches to Silesia, and whose scouts brought in the news, was in doubt about their object. It was only evident that the prince had not yet gone into winter quarters ; but was he simply retiring into the interior of Bohemia, or did he design a new movement against Silesia? The very air at Berlin was charged with rumors, and doubts, and apprehensions.

self from criticising the Prussian counter-declaration, because it was drafted in German, and therefore unintelligible to him. *Polit. Corresp.*, iv. 336.

The new activity of Frederic's enemies was in part due to the assurances which they had received from St. Petersburg. It does not appear that Elizabeth herself announced to them any other action of her own than that already communicated to Prussia, that is, an eventual diversion in behalf of Saxony. But Hohenholz, the Austrian resident at St. Petersburg, learned that the empress had fortified herself in her resolution by prayers in her private chapel, and this ceremony seemed to give a peculiar sacredness to her pledges.¹ Her officers spoke of the mobilization of forty or fifty thousand men. Is it strange that the more sanguine spirits at Vienna and Dresden drew fresh confidence from such auspicious reports, and prepared at length to carry out the plan embodied in the agreement of the previous August, and so warmly supported by Saxony, of a direct attack upon the oldest province of Prussia?

The original scheme contemplated simultaneous invasions at two different points. While prince Charles and his reorganized army advanced through the Lausitz toward Crossen, count Rutowski with his Saxons, reënforced by Grünne's corps, was to march directly upon Halle.² The army of observation under prince Leopold had been in part disbanded. But, though it would be at once remobilized on the approach of danger, Rutowski was confident that he could throw the Old Dessauer back into Magdeburg, and with a small investing force shut him up within the walls. The rest of the army would then be free to join prince Charles in the Lausitz.³

¹ Arneth, iii 138. Elizabeth seems to have been distressed that Frederic was not equally true to his religious duties. Hyndford, who had been transferred to St. Petersburg early in 1745, reports her as saying of the king: "He is certainly a bad prince; he has no fear of God, turns everything into ridicule, and never goes to church." Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 203.

² Adelung, v. 209.

³ Arneth, iii. 141.

This plan was revealed to Frederic at a timely moment. The Swedish envoy at Dresden, Wulfenstierna, like his colleague Rudenskiöld at Berlin, had been long attached to the Prussian cause, and had often sent important information to Frederic.¹ Enjoying the confidence of count Brühl, he also had access to many of the secrets of Saxon diplomacy. And Wulfenstierna, having learned the details of the proposed campaign, — it is immaterial whether they were revealed by Brühl after dinner, when he was flushed with wine, or in some other way, — sent them at once to Rudenskiöld, who communicated them on the eleventh of November to Frederic.² On the same day the patriotic people of Berlin were escorting the trophies of Sohr and Hohenfriedberg to the garrison church.

Hurried councils were held, and preparations at once made to meet the new danger. Old Leopold was ordered back to Halle to draw together his scattered detachments, and complied unwillingly, for he agreed with Podewils that the alarm was false, and had so long been denied the pleasure of fighting that he refused to believe that his hour had come.³ A sharp admonition from the king soon brought him to his senses. He was reminded that when he had an army of his own he could use it in his own way, but now he was expected to obey the orders of his superiors; whereupon the capacious veteran set out, with loud growls of discontent, for the post of duty.⁴ In like manner the younger Leopold was instructed to collect together the forces in Silesia, and await the king's arrival. The Prussian envoys abroad were notified of the wicked scheme of the Dresden court. Andrié in particular was ordered to hold strong language to the English ministers, to remind them that there was a treaty of Hanover yet unexecuted, and to

¹ Droysen, V. ii. 589.

² *Pr. Staatsschriften*, i. 720 n.

³ Orlich, ii. 279, 280.

⁴ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 152.

inquire what measures they proposed to take in the unexpected crisis that had arisen.¹

Two days later more alarming news came from St. Petersburg. Mardefeld reported that a large number of troops had received orders to be ready for immediate service, and that a manifesto already written explained that they were to be sent to assist the elector of Saxony, in consequence of the Prussian declaration of war. The envoy himself was still incredulous, and without anxiety. There was more smoke than fire, he thought; people of sense were of the opinion that the grand-chancellor only aimed, by a grand show of support, to seem to earn the large sums which he was drawing from the Saxon treasury. But Frederic was less sanguine. "I am surprised that he treats such an embarrassing affair so lightly," was his laconic annotation on the margin of the dispatch.²

It was under the impression caused by this series of rumors that he wrote the pathetic letter of the 15th of November to Louis the Fifteenth. The easy manner in which it disposed of the negotiation at Hanover has already been mentioned, and the pathos of the production is to be found in the concluding paragraphs, which paint the ominous condition of Prussian affairs. "I should be enjoying the pleasures of peace," wrote Frederic, "if the interests of your majesty had not engaged me in the present war. Your enemies and my own, united by ambition, hate, and vengeance, are exciting against me all the powers of Europe; are alienating my friends by their arts, and corrupting my neighbors by their money. Prince Charles of Lorraine is about to invade Silesia, for which I depart at once.

¹ Frederic to Andrié, 12 November, 1745. A copy of Wulfenstierna's letter was enclosed.

² *Polit. Corresp.*, iv. 339. Herrmann, *Gesch. des russischen Staats*, v. 88, agrees with Mardefeld.

The Saxons, reënforced by a detachment sent by count Traun from the Rhine, intend to attack me in the district of Magdeburg; while the empress of Russia sends to their aid an auxiliary corps of twelve thousand, which is already approaching the frontiers of Preussen. In such a perilous crisis I throw myself upon the friendship, the goodness, and the wisdom of your majesty for counsel, trusting that you cannot decide now to abandon the last ally whom you have in Germany. The case is urgent, and I have so much confidence in your character, sentiments, and sagacity that I promise myself everything from your assistance."¹

The next day Frederic set out for Silesia. His plan was to hold the army of Silesia ready for action on the frontier of the Lausitz, but, in order to keep his record clear with Russia, not actually to enter the province until the Austrians had first set the example. Then he would at once cross the border, and attack them on the pretext of self-defence. The Old Dessauer was at the same time to enter Saxony from his side, and march straight upon the Saxon army near Leipsic, attacking it if prudent, or, if it were too strongly entrenched, making a diversion toward Dresden.² The part assigned to Leopold was that about which Frederic felt the most doubt. He feared that slowness and obstinacy might so prolong his movements that Rutowski would anticipate him, and carry the war into Prussian territory.³

The danger of an offensive movement by the Saxon general had, however, been removed in the interval, though without Frederic's knowledge, by repre-

Frederic's
plans.

Russian
scruples.

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, iv. 339, 340. The king took such interest in this letter that he sent it first to Podewils for his opinion. The minister found it so excellently phrased that no harm would be done if it should fall into the hands of the English. *Ibid.*, p. 338.

² Frederic to Leopold of Dessau, 21 November, 1745.

³ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 151.

sentations made at Dresden in the name of the Russian empress. They required the Austrians to take the lead in invading Prussia. If the Saxons should first cross the frontier, they would put themselves distinctly in the wrong, or at least make it difficult for Russia, with due regard for consistency, to come to their relief. And in any event the Russian corps would not be ready to act before the following spring.¹ This suddenly changed the whole plan of campaign. Rutowski was forced to rest on the defensive, and allow prince Charles first to execute his part of the programme.

This programme prescribed for him, after entering the Lausitz, a line of march nearly due north, and parallel with the frontier between the Lausitz and Silesia. Such a movement, he thought, or his military advisers thought, would leave it open to Frederic only to make a circuit around the Lusatian frontier, in order to cover Crossen, and intercept the Austrians on their way to Berlin. But the king's strategy was as bold as that of his adversary. He encouraged the delusion of the Austrians by hastily recalling the divisions which were operating in Upper Silesia, and drew together, with every appearance of haste, an army of thirty-five thousand men near Liegnitz.² Winterfeld, with only three thousand hussars, patrolled the river Queiss, which formed the boundary of the Lausitz. The belief was thus encouraged that only a police guard was maintained on the frontier, and that the bulk of the Prussian force had retreated toward Crossen. In fact the army was lying quietly a few miles back from the river, and the king, with his headquarters first at Gros-Adlersdorf and then at Mittlau, listened anxiously for the first news that the Austrians had entered the Lausitz. His column was thus headed at right angles to their expected line of march. He pro-

Frederic's
strategy.

¹ Arneth, iii. 143; Droysen, V. ii. 597.

² Orlich, ii. 285.

posed to intercept them indeed, but by springing upon their flank as they proceeded, heedless of danger, down the valley of the Neisse.¹

For several days no tidings came; the king even feared that prince Charles had changed his course for Silesia. But on the morning of the 22d of November Winterfeld announced that the en-
Prince Charles in the Lausitz.
 emy had appeared on the opposite, or Lusatian, side of the Queiss. They were broken up into small parties, he reported, and were apparently not expecting danger. The same night this vigilant officer threw a ponton bridge over the Queiss, near the site of the existing stone bridge at Naumburg. Everything was then ready for crossing.

Frederic formed his resolution as soon as this report was received. The Old Dessauer was at once instructed to "spring at the throat of the Saxons" who confronted him.² Orders were issued that the army of Silesia should march at daybreak on the twenty-third, and be ready to cross the Queiss at eleven o'clock. The passage of the river was effected in four columns, and early in the afternoon the Prussians marched upon the enemy. The cavalry were in advance, and of the cavalry Zieten, with his hussars, held the lead. About four o'clock Zieten reached the long, straggling village known as Catholic-Hennersdorf, which he reported to be occupied by three squadrons and two battalions of Saxons. But he promised to attack at once, and hold the enemy until reënforcements could arrive.

The gallant officer had undertaken a difficult task. Twice he was repulsed, and even a third charge, with the aid of three squadrons of cuirassiers,
Catholic-Hennersdorf.
 was likewise unsuccessful. The so-called white hussars then came up and attacked the Saxons in the

¹ Not to be confounded with the Silesian river of the same name.

² Frederic to Leopold of Dessau, 22 November, 1745.

flank, the black hussars struck them from the rear, and seven squadrons joined Zieten in their front. In the face of these odds the Saxon horse retired. But the infantry, forming in squares, still disputed the ground, and fought with desperation, until the arrival of grenadiers and artillery made further resistance hopeless. The victory remained with the Prussians. They captured a number of battle-flags, one cannon, and a thousand prisoners. But the most striking consequence was that prince Charles, on receiving the news of the defeat of this small Saxon detachment, at once called together his divisions, and,

without awaiting a general battle, fled ignominiously back to Bohemia. Winterfeld followed

him sharply, but failed to bring on an engagement. One after another the strong places of Lausitz fell into Frederic's hands; and nothing apparently stood between him and Dresden. The elector and Brühl hastily packed their effects, left a council of ministers to conduct affairs, and sought an asylum in Prague.

Frederic was still, however, anxious for peace, and was ready, as before, to abide by the treaty of Hanover. In this spirit he opened negotiations with the Saxon court, through the medium of sir Thomas Villiers, the English resident at Dresden. The correspondence extends over a period of nearly three weeks. It is printed in the form of an appendix to the king's history of this period,¹ but, though evidence in regard to a certain phase or stage of current events, its permanent historical value does not clearly appear. Villiers seems to have been addressed because it was supposed that he would ardently represent the English desire for peace. But, if such was his own inclination, he failed to move the Saxon ministers; for even after the flight of the elector and Brühl they continued to evade direct answers,

¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, vol. iii. The *Polit. Corresp.* has only the king's letters.

interposed impossible conditions, and showed an evident reluctance to meet the situation in a frank and reasonable spirit. It is, however, probable that the courage of August was briefly revived by contact with the stronger mind of Maria Theresa. The empress-queen still maintained her own spirit of defiance; ordered prince Charles, with his army, back to Saxony; detached more troops from the Rhine for service against Frederic; and planned vigorous measures for resuming the struggle. Indeed, she decided to make a considerable sacrifice for peace with France, in order to concentrate all her resources upon the war against Prussia.

Mention has already been made of secret and somewhat informal negotiations between agents of France and Austria. These were, in a sense, directed by the Saxon court. The intermediary was one Saul, an intriguing Saxon diplomatist. Louis was represented by Vaulgrenant, his envoy at Dresden; and the Austrian agent was count Harrach, who, having received the orders of his sovereign, was now on his way to the Saxon capital. August met him at Lobositz, and learned at least part of his instructions. He learned that Maria Theresa had consented to cede the towns of Ypres and Furnes, in the Netherlands, to France, as the price of peace, and, as it was supposed that this would be the utmost extent of Louis' demands, a successful issue of the negotiations seemed probable. The Saxon council of ministers was, therefore, instructed to prolong the correspondence with Frederic, in order to give Harrach time for concluding with Vaulgrenant.¹ But the king had a vague knowledge of this intrigue, and saw the necessity for prompt action. He could not have judged more wisely

Negotiations
between
France and
Austria.

¹ Arneth, iii. 152. The demand, for instance, that the Prussians should not only levy no more contributions in Saxon territory, but should even refund those already levied (Memoir of the Saxon Court, 9 December, 1745), can only be regarded as a device to gain time.

if he had known, what it is probable that August himself did not know, that the queen had reluctantly consented to authorize count Harrach, in case the negotiations with Vaulgrenant should fail, and if all the circumstances should make it unavoidable, to sign a peace with Prussia on the simple basis of the treaty of Hanover. The latter wing of the alternative was, of course, the one which George II. was by treaty bound to support. But, as elector of Hanover, he allowed his minister, Munchäusen, to press quite as warmly, though secretly, the separate treaty with France.¹

Such was the diplomatic situation. The military problem seemed to be one not so much of actual fighting as of rapid marching. Two Prussian columns, that of the Old Dessauer and that of the king himself, were converging upon Dresden. Between Leopold and the Saxon capital stood the army of Rutowski. From the southwest prince Charles was returning through the wild valleys of the Saxon Switzerland in the hope of reaching Dresden before Frederic, or of joining Rutowski before Frederic could join Leopold. But the Dessauer was not as a general distinguished for celerity of movement. He took his own time, felt his way as he proceeded, and observed precautions which seemed pedantic and useless to his young master.²

He entered Saxon territory on the twenty-ninth of November, and marched directly upon Leipsic, which was the headquarters of Rutowski. But the Saxon general, instead of making a stand there, retired without a blow toward Dresden, whereupon Leopold occupied the city, and, in obedience to orders,

The military problem.

Campaign of the Old Dessauer.

¹ Borkowsky, *Die Englische Friedensvermittlung*, passim.

² "Sie gehen so langsam als wenn Sie sich vorgenommen hatten, mich aus meiner Avantage zu setzen," etc. Frederic to Leopold of Dessau, 9 December, 1745. I cite the letter as one of many in the same strain, though it anticipates slightly the chronological order.

levied a heavy contribution. From this point the plan of campaign required that two objects be kept in view, the pursuit of Rutowski, and the seizure of a bridge over the Elbe by which a junction could be effected with the king. Frederic proposed the bridge at Meissen, and sent general Lehwaldt forward with an advance guard. His own headquarters were at Bautzen. But Leopold, true to his own military system, struck northward to Torgau, where there was also a bridge and a store of provisions. The flour was seized, ovens were built, bread was baked, the soldiers were fed, the commissariat was stocked. But three days were lost by this movement, and it was not until the twelfth of December that the prince reached Meissen. Here he took up the corps of general Lehwaldt, and pushed on after the Saxons.

Rutowski, who had been joined by Grünne with his Austrians, had a somewhat simpler task. His first duty was of course to cover the capital. But this required him to retreat no farther than to a point where he would be nearer to prince Charles The Saxons take position. than Leopold to Frederic, for, reinforced by the prince, he could meet Leopold with vastly superior numbers. He fixed accordingly on the village of Kesselsdorf, about five miles west of Dresden, for his final stand. The choice was admirable. The Saxon line of battle stretched along a rugged ridge from Kesselsdorf to the Elbe, while in front lay the Tschonengrund, a thick miry depression. Through this crept a sluggish brook, the Tschone. Clumps of trees afforded shelter for the infantry, and cannon frowned from every advantageous site. At the extreme right, near the Elbe, lay the Austrian corps of Grünne.

In the mean time the Old Dessauer, unmindful of Frederic's impatience and of his fiery letters, plodded onward, slowly, methodically, cautiously, yet resolved that the event should vindicate his conduct. The thirteenth, the fourteenth, all day long, he marched over half-frozen ground,

in snow and ice and water. The night of the fourteenth he passed at Rohrsdorf; and early on the morning of the fifteenth he came face to face with the enemy. They had the advantage of numbers and position; they were on a hill, and had thirty-five as against thirty-two thousand men. But in the actual presence of the foe the spirits of the old hero rose, and he made instant preparations for battle. Even then his native prudence refused to desert him. He carefully surveyed the position of the enemy; studied the facilities of the ground; and chose the most favorable point for attack. With the trained eye of a soldier he saw that the village of Kesselsdorf itself was the key to the situation, both because the intervening ravine was there least deep, and because, being the extreme left of the enemy's line, it would, if carried, turn their flank. As soon as these details were carefully settled, the Dessauer bared his head, and kneeling offered a homely prayer to the God of battles. Then, "In the name of Jesus, forward!"¹

A chosen force of one regiment of infantry and three battalions of grenadiers, under general Hertzberg, charged at once to the sound of the martial airs of Prussia. But the problem which Leopold had to solve offered difficulties such as had seldom confronted even that bronzed hero of many battles. The assaulting column had first to traverse a treacherous quagmire, and then to climb an icy slope, in the face of cannon belching forth a deadly fire, and of infantry safely posted behind rifle-pits, hedges, and trees. Hertzberg fell, shot dead, while urging on the grenadiers. Fresh troops were thrown in to support them, and a second attack was made. This too failed, and the Prussians fled in disorder. In the two charges they lost, out of thirty-six hundred, five hundred and seventy-five officers and men killed, and nine hundred wounded.² The enemy regarded

Leopold
slowly
approaches.

Battle of
Kesselsdorf,
15 December,
1745

¹ Orlich, ii. 332.

² Orlich, ii. 332, 333.

the day as already won. But their premature exultation changed the issue of the battle. The Saxon grenadiers, who had hitherto held their ground with excellent self-control, now lost all discipline, and leaving their position plunged with wild shouts of triumph upon the retreating foe. But this gave Leopold his opportunity. He instantly let loose his dragoons, and thousands of deadly sabres soon flashed among the astonished Saxons. The shock swept them back through their original position, and completely off the field of battle. While these stirring events were taking place on the Prussian right, Maurice of Dessau, youngest son of the old prince, was conducting a not less desperate struggle against the Saxon centre. The problem was nearly as difficult as that before Kesselsdorf. But Maurice's heart had been fired, like his father's, by the sharp reproofs of Frederic. With drawn sword he personally led a regiment of infantry; two soldiers carried him on their shoulders across the brook; and the force charged with such impetuosity that they not only broke the ranks of the enemy, but were even borne far beyond their own supports. The Saxons saw their opportunity, and hurried forward fresh troops under the duke of Weissenfels. But Maurice held his ground until reinforcements arrived, when the attack was renewed. The Saxons still fought stubbornly. The Prussian battalions melted away before the eyes of their generals. But their repeated charges and splendid tenacity slowly forced the enemy back, until the capture of Kesselsdorf by the right wing made a flank attack possible, and ended the battle. The whole Saxon line broke in disorder and fled into the darkness.

The victory of the Prussians was dearly bought. Their losses are put at sixteen hundred killed, and three thousand wounded, while the enemy lost in killed and wounded less than four thousand. But they left in the hands of the victors nearly seven thousand

Leopold's
victory.

prisoners, forty-eight cannon, and seven battle-flags. It was therefore a proud day for Leopold. The grim old warrior sought the thickest part of the fight, had three balls through his cloak, and is said to have declared that by victory or by death he would wipe out the disgrace of the king's reprimands.

During the whole battle the Austrian corps at the extreme right lay on their arms without firing a shot, and prince Charles, who had already reached Dresden, listened also to the roar of the cannon without marching to the relief of Rutowski. The excuse for this criminal inaction may be read in Arneth. It is in substance that general Elberfeld, who in the absence of Grünne commanded the Austrian contingent, offered his assistance, which was refused, and that prince Charles had delayed his march because Rutowski had assured him there would be no battle before the sixteenth. But Arneth himself does not regard these reasons as sufficient.¹

¹ Arneth, iii. 154-158 ; cf. Orlich, ii. 338.

d'Argenson. But the recovery of her lost province was the main object of Maria Theresa in consenting to peace with Louis, and if that were to be excluded the negotiations would have for her no further meaning.¹ Thus Harrach might now justly have felt that the extreme necessity, the condition on which he had been authorized to treat with Prussia, had arrived. The allied armies beaten and demoralized, Dresden at the mercy of the foe, the elector of Saxony a fugitive, the negotiations with France apparently hopeless, — such a situation pointed imperatively to peace with Frederic as the only course left to his sovereign and his country. The Saxons had already appointed commissioners to confer with Podewils.² They had been appointed indeed before the battle of Kesselsdorf, and perhaps only as a part of the policy of gaining time. But subsequent events had made their mission a serious one, and Austria was thus confronted with the danger of losing her ally at a time when the loss could ill be borne. A grave responsibility rested on count Harrach. But he was unwilling either to break off negotiations with Vaalgrenant, or to open negotiations with Frederic. The crisis being urgent, and the approach of the Prussians making it unwise for him longer to tarry in Dresden, he retired to Pirna, and thence wrote for instructions.

The day after Kesselsdorf, Frederic, whose advance had reached Meissen during the battle, paid a visit to the Old Dessauer. On reaching the field he dismounted, uncovered, and warmly embraced the delighted veteran. The king rarely repaired an in-

Frederic
visits the Old
Dessauer.

¹ Cf. Arneth, iii. 160, 161; Droysen, V. ii. 617, 618. It is, of course, easy to assert that the reservation in respect to Silesia was not owing to any scruples of good faith toward Frederic, but only to an unwillingness to restore Austria to her original power. See, e. g., Borkowsky, *Eng. Friedensvermittlung*, p. 48.

² Villiers to Frederic, 13 December, 1745.

jury openly and frankly, but he could recognize good service with felicitous tact, and Leopold needed no apology from his master to make his triumph complete. The exultation with which he conducted Frederic over the battle-field, showed him the strategical points, explained where general Hertzberg fell, where George of Darmstadt with one regiment put to flight four times the number, could not in the circumstances easily have been suppressed.

During these congratulations the stern duties yet remaining were by no means neglected. Early on the sixteenth Leopold summoned the city of Dresden. There remained only a nominal garrison of three thousand militia, and general Bose, the commandant, had been instructed to gain two or three days' time before the capitulation, for the removal of the archives and the treasure. But his conditional overtures were promptly rejected. There must be an unconditional surrender, he was informed; all the troops, officers as well as men, be made prisoners of war; the state funds and the arms in the arsenal become the property of the king of Prussia. At six o'clock on the morning of the eighteenth Frederic with ten battalions entered the city.

In this situation the king adopted a combined policy of firmness and conciliation. The Austrians, whose presence in the land was a continued menace, Frederic in Dresden. were politely pushed over the frontier into Bohemia. All important strategical points were occupied. A heavy contribution was levied and collected. But strict discipline was maintained among the Prussian soldiers. No resentment was shown individuals, and every effort was made to reassure the people as to the future. One of Frederic's first acts was to visit the royal children, who yet remained in the capital, and he continued during his stay to treat them with the greatest consideration.¹ With

¹ Droysen, V. ii. 633.

equal wisdom he showed himself often in public, visited the opera, gave concerts and receptions, and on Sunday even attended divine service with the Old Dessauer and other leading generals. He found lodgings in the palace of the princess Lubomirska, and one of his first requests was that madame Racknitz, who was a blooming maiden when as crown prince he visited Dresden in 1728, should be invited to his receptions.¹

Podewils and Eichel seemed to fear that Frederic might be unduly exalted by his success, and demand exorbitant terms from his prostrate enemies.² But nothing was further from his purpose. He was too wise to sacrifice pressing political interests to the opportunity, however tempting, of acting the part of military conqueror. For his situation was by no means absolutely secure. He had given a direct challenge to Russia by entering Saxony, and it was reported that Elizabeth's army of relief was already on the way to the frontier. Upper Silesia had been again given up to the Hungarian insurgents. It was known that Maria Theresa had promised the aid of Traun's army from the Rhine. And prince Charles and Rutowski could, after a short respite, again bring fifty or sixty thousand men into the field. But Frederic had no reserves either of men or of money. Wisdom required, therefore, that the panic caused by his fortunate victories and his occupation of Saxony be turned to advantage before his enemies should recover courage and the opportunity pass away.

At this time, too, Valori's secretary, Darget, appeared in Dresden with the reply of Louis the Fifteenth to Frederic's appeal for help. "Your majesty's letter confirms," it said, "what I already knew of the convention of Hanover. I was naturally surprised that a treaty should be negotiated, concluded, signed, and ratified

Louis and
Frederic.

¹ Rodenbeck, *Beiträge*, i. 441.

² Droysen, V. ii. 634.

with a prince who is my enemy, before the least information about it was given to me. . . . I counted upon your diversion. I myself made two powerful ones, in Flanders and in Italy, and detained the most formidable army of the queen of Hungary on the Rhine. My outlays, my efforts, were crowned with the greatest success ; and your majesty took advantage of them to conclude a treaty without my knowledge. Had the queen agreed to it, her entire army in Bohemia would have been turned at once upon me. That is not the way to make peace. I feel, not the less, the peril which you run, and nothing can exceed my impatience to learn that you are in safety, for your tranquillity will bring my own. You are the terror of your enemies, and have won advantages at once important and glorious. The approach of winter, which must suspend military operations, will be itself a defence. Who is more capable than your majesty himself of giving counsel? You have only to follow the dictates of your own reason, your experience, and, above all, your honor. As to assistance from me, which could only be in the form of subsidies or diversions, I have done all that is possible, and shall continue to employ the means most conducive to success. I am increasing my forces ; I neglect nothing ; I am making every preparation to begin the next campaign with the greatest vigor. If your majesty has plans which will facilitate my enterprises, I beg that they may be communicated to me, and it will give me great pleasure to act in concert with you.”¹

At first view, Frederic writes by way of comment, this reply seemed mild and courteous ; but when one considered the situation of the king of Prussia, and the negotiations with France which had preceded it, one noticed a tone of irony, the more out of place since it had not been stipulated that the reciprocal engagements

¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 173, 174.

of the treaty of Versailles should be fulfilled by epigrams.¹ Then he proceeds to give a paraphrase of the letter as it would read when stripped of all verbiage. His known standpoint in the negotiations of Hanover, and his indignation at the feeble support given by France on the Rhine, suggested an obvious parody, which the reader can easily supply. "Conti detained the principal army of the queen in Germany by retreating across the Rhine," he makes Louis say between the lines, "leaving the election for emperor to go by default; Traun was at liberty to send Grünne's corps to Saxony, and perhaps to follow with all his force. . . . I have done great things in this campaign, and even your name has been heard. I regret the dangerous situation in which you have placed yourself out of love for me; but one acquires only glory in making sacrifices for France. Continue to show fortitude and to suffer. Follow the example of the other allies, whom I abandoned, indeed, but to whom I doled out some charity after they had lost all of their possessions. Take counsel of your own wits, and of the presumption with which you have often obtruded your advice upon me. . . . If misfortune should visit you, I promise that the academy will deliver a funeral oration over your kingdom. Your name shall be placed among those of other martyrs who have been lost in the service of France."²

Opinions may differ on the question whether Louis' letter, or Frederic's parody of it has the subtler irony. But Frederic is an incontestable authority in regard to the effect which it had on the negotiations for peace. Even if he had hesitated before, which he does not appear to have done, all doubts were now removed.

The Saxon authorities notified Podewils as early as the sixteenth that their commissioners had received full power

¹ The letter was written, the reader must remember, before the battle of Kesselsdorf.

² *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iii. 174, 175.

to treat for peace.¹ Count Harrach's orders, which arrived not much later, were quite as explicit. Negotiations for peace. On the first report of the disaster of Kesselsdorf the empress summoned a council of ministers; and it was at once resolved that, since the French terms could not be accepted, Austria must adopt the convention of Hanover. In this sense count Harrach was instructed.² The conferences began on the twenty-third of December, those with Saxony being, on Frederic's demand, conducted separately. Count Harrach was to be invited simply to accept the treaty of Hanover. But for Saxony harsher treatment was reserved.³

This discrimination was naturally odious to the Saxon commissioners. They interposed objections and obstacles, which, however, vanished when Podewils gave notice that, in case of further delay, the king would return to Berlin, and leave the negotiations to take their natural course, while his army remained in occupation of the land. This prospect overcame their scruples. Frederic yielded some unessential points; but the terms, to which on Christmas treaties. the twenty-fifth of December the Saxon commissioners announced their adhesion, were practically dictated by the conqueror.⁴ It was stipulated that Dresden should be evacuated immediately after the ratification of the treaty, and Leipzig a week later; that only the contributions levied before the twenty-second should be exacted; but that an indemnity of one million thalers should be paid by Saxony; that a mutual restitution of prisoners should take place; that the electress-queen should renounce her eventual claims, as an Austrian princess, to Silesia and Glatz; and that Prussian holders

¹ Droysen, V. ii. 633.

² Arneth, iii. 163. The exact text of Bartenstein's laconic dispatch, *ibid.*, p. 444.

³ Frederic to Podewils, 22 December, 1745.

⁴ See *Polit. Corresp.*, iv. 386, 387.

of Saxon exchequer bills, which had greatly depreciated, should be paid in full.¹ The accession of August to the convention of Hanover was only one of the articles in the peace. The treaty with Austria was based upon the treaty of Hanover, the preliminary peace of Breslau of 1742, and the definitive treaty of Berlin of the same year; gave rise to fewer difficulties during negotiation; and, like that with Saxony, was signed on Christmas at noon. The only concession which Maria Theresa obtained, and that merely one of form, was the recognition by Frederic of the grand-duke's election as emperor.²

The peace being thus concluded, it was next in order to explain the reasons for it; and Darget, whom Frederic defended his conduct. Frederic had always liked personally, was the first recipient of the royal confidence. His interview is reported with great fulness. The king received him frankly, and entered into a long discursive account of the motives which prompted his conduct in the separate negotiations. Whether these were merely diplomatic reasons for effect abroad, or were sincerely given in a sudden outburst of confidence, does not absolutely appear. But the indications are that the king correctly described his motives. He feared, he said, longer to expose his country to the vicissitudes of fortune. Never would he forget the anxiety with which he had left Berlin in November. He stood on the edge of a precipice, and the slightest accident would have hurled him into a fatal abyss. If fortune had turned against him, he would now be an exile without a throne, and his subjects would be living under a foreign despotism. He did not for an instant cherish the delusion that Austria would be forever conciliated by the treaty about to be made, but he left the future to his successors. They must preserve what he had won. During the dozen years of life that might be left to him, he

¹ Wenck, ii. 207 et seq.

² Adelung, vol. v., Beilage I.

expected to enjoy his possessions in peace, and would take more pleasure in furthering the prosperity of his people than in planning enterprises which demanded their blood and treasure.¹

To his faithful minister, who reported the signing of the treaties, the king replied in the same spirit. He thanked Heaven, he said, for the good news which was announced; he hoped and flattered himself that the work would prove enduring.² Finally he sent what may be called a formal farewell to Louis XV., in reply ^{Letter to Louis XV.} to the letter brought by Darget. "I had expected some real assistance from your majesty," he wrote, "in consequence of my application in November last. Without discussing the reasons which you may have for leaving your allies to their own resources, I feel happy that the valor of my troops has rescued me from a critical situation. If I had been unfortunate you would only have pitied me, and I should have been helpless. How can an alliance subsist unless the two parties coöperate heartily toward the common end? You wish me to take counsel of my own wits, and I obey. They enjoin me to put an immediate end to a war which, having no object since the death of the late emperor, is only causing a useless sacrifice of blood; they tell me that it is time to think of my own safety, that a large force of Muscovites threatens my country from Courland, that the army of Traun may inundate Saxony, that fortune is fickle, and that I have no help of any kind to expect from my allies, . . . that, after the letter just received from your majesty, nothing remains except to sign the peace." But, in spite of all that had taken place, the king would remain the good friend of France, would be glad to aid the work of pacification, and was the affectionate brother of his most Christian majesty.³

¹ Valori, i. 290-294.

² Frederic to Podewils, 25 December, 1745.

³ Frederic to Louis XV., 25 December, 1745. *Polit. Corresp.*, iv.

This was taking leave in an honest manner, the king adds, with pardonable pride in the work of his pen.¹ To Valori he communicated another cause for relief. "For myself," he says, "I enjoy the consolation that I have never received the alms of France."² And Chambrier at Paris was ordered to explain the case to the marquis d'Argenson by considerations similar to those already given in the other letters.³

The king left Dresden for Berlin on the twenty-seventh. Podewils remained a few days longer to adjust some details, and then followed his master. The ratifications were exchanged through Villiers. It is, however, characteristic that the empress, in announcing the conclusion of the peace to the diet at Regensburg, declared that she had yielded out of consideration for the naval powers, which had made such urgent representations on the subject.⁴

Frederic more modestly attributed the result to the
Frederic's
luck. valor of his troops, and his own good luck.⁵ What he meant by the valor of his troops is of course clear; and nothing which he could say in that respect was likely to go beyond the truth. But what did he understand by luck, or fortune? Was it a mere caprice of arbitrary gods, whose intentions no finite wisdom could foresee? Was it something like the uncertainties of dice, which are subject at best only to the rule of probabilities? Or was the figure taken rather from a game at cards, in which an expert player will often win the stakes even with an inferior hand?

389, 390. This version was taken from the letter actually sent to Louis, and now preserved in the French archives. The one given by Frederic himself, *Œuvres*, iii. 175, 176, differs somewhat in phraseology.

¹ Ibid., p. 176.

² *Polit. Corresp.*, iv. 390.

³ Frederic to Chambrier, 31 December, 1745.

⁴ Droysen, V. ii. 643.

⁵ In the conversation with Darget and elsewhere.

Of these three hypotheses the last is probably the one which Frederic's friends would be most willing to accept. And, within certain limits, this inter-pretation must be pronounced the correct one. Much of what the vulgar call Frederic's good luck was really either an acute foresight, preparing and ruling contingencies, or a spontaneous insight, seizing the advantages of the moment. It was due to no accident that the Prussians fought at Hohenfriedberg with the sun in their favor, but to the energetic march the night before, and the resolution to attack promptly at daybreak. A singularly quick and accurate insight was, in short, a faculty which served Frederic with the like success in war and in politics. Under its direction he undertook an enterprise which was not only perilous in-itself, but which also flew in the face of all the traditions of the house of Prussia. In obedience to it he strode contemptuously over the objections raised by statesmen like Podewils, or soldiers like the old prince of Dessau, defeated the armies of Austria in five great battles, seized Saxony by the throat, and held all the diplomatists of Europe at bay. He committed, indeed, many mistakes. More than once he was confronted with what seemed inevitable defeat and ruin. But crises like these quickly roused him from his errors, and his good judgment, again restored to its authority, pointed out the reasonable path to safety.

Yet, while Frederic's judgment was prompt and keen and penetrating, it was not of the kind which characterizes a safe statesman, as the term is understood by the world. He was not prudent, like Burleigh, or Walpole, or Fleury. He took enormous risks; and it is not difficult to understand why his audacity filled the politicians of the old school with amazement and alarm. But in his case audacity, instead of impairing his judgment, really corrected its defects and errors. For the statesmanship, like the generalship, of that age,

was the slave of formulæ and precedents and pedantry; adhered rigidly to systems and policies; moved clumsily within the sphere of grand combinations; and was thrown into confusion by the slightest variation in the prearranged factors. It was completely baffled by the sudden appearance of a prince who threw all the doctrines of the schools to the winds, and turned his back with contempt on the so-called rules of the political art. This prince had, indeed, his own well-defined objects, which he rarely lost from view. But the means to these objects were elastic, were changed with the change of circumstances, and were unceremoniously abandoned when they no longer served their purpose. That almost superstitious affection with which a certain class of men, in politics and in war, adhere to plans once formed, was wholly wanting to Frederic. The best method of diplomacy for him was the method which succeeded. The highest rule of strategy was that which, suiting itself to the occasion, crushed the armies of the enemy. Hence the king's audacity was one of the most effective elements of his tactics, since it enabled him to cross easily the laborious mechanical contrivances of his rivals, and to win the victory while they were still planning the battle.

Frederic had, however, a third quality, without which the other two would have been an incomplete equipment. If his judgment, however sagacious, had rested on a firm ethical foundation, if his audacity had been subject to a high standard of political morality, his policy would have followed rigid lines, and grave emergencies would have found his choice of expedients far more narrow. It was, therefore, a vast advantage for his schemes that he seldom paused to hear the voice of honor and good faith. Self-interest alone governed his conduct. He twice deserted France by at least technical breaches of faith, in order to serve his own ends by a separate treaty of peace. He adhered to the treaty of

His unscrupulousness.

Hanover after it was no longer formally binding, because that seemed the only basis on which it was feasible to treat with Maria Theresa. Thus, restrained by no rules of political integrity, he played fast and loose with all the courts of Europe; adopted or deserted allies with perfect facility; changed his course at any time with an easy indifference to the scruples of conscience; and wrote didactic moral poems while he was planning deliberate schemes of perfidy. In the divine order of human society, such a man rarely escapes punishment forever. Frederic found his in the terrible trials of the Seven Years' War, in the anguish of his own spirit, in the prostration of his people. But for the present his conduct seemed to be crowned with success. His judgment stood confirmed, his audacity rewarded, his unscrupulousness approved. His grasp on Silesia was tightened. He was feared throughout Europe as an adroit politician and a successful commander.

Yet he stood now absolutely alone. There was not a power in Europe which owed him any good-will, and hardly one which did not hate him for treat-^{Isolation of Prussia.}ment received at his hands. Austria and Saxony, though yielding to the force of events, were certain to seize the first opportunity for revenge; Russia, whose advice and whose threats had been treated with contempt, chafed with irritation, and demanded the recall of Mardefeld;¹ from Paris Chambrier reported that he was obliged to hear bitter denunciations of Prussia;² and even in England, while the ministers congratulated parliament on the peace of Dresden,³ the manner in which it had been extorted from an ally was ill fitted to arouse exultation.

¹ See Frederic to the princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, 18 January, 1746. Lord Hyndford, writing from St. Petersburg in May, 1746, makes Elizabeth speak of "la convention de Hanovre qui a fait échouer les projets qu'elle avait formés en faveur de la maison d'Autriche." Borkowsky, p. 98.

² *Polit. Corresp.*, v. 10.

³ Speech from the throne, 14 January, 1746.

Thus, let him turn in what direction he might, Frederic met hatred or jealousy or distrust; nowhere perfect cordiality and confidence. The enemies whom he had again humbled, the allies whom he had a second time betrayed, the mediator whom he had dexterously used for his own advantage, could be expected at most only to pay an outward respect to the undoubted strength of his position.

For Frederic's position was strong, in spite of his isolation. He stood alone; but in politics, as in nature, there are times when solitude is freedom, when perfect liberty of action is better than the complications, the restraints, the uncertainties, of even the most engaging treaties of alliance. This was the independence which Frederic now enjoyed. From the high vantage-ground which he had reached he surveyed with watchful eye and critical interest the progress of the great European struggle. But no inducements tempted him again to descend into the arena. Urged by the French ministers to prevent the circles of the Empire from lending their aid to Austria, he replied that he could take no steps which would lead him anew into the war.¹ A request from England for diplomatic, or eventually military, aid against France, was likewise denied.² Even the English demand for Prussian troops to use against the pretender was evaded until it was thought they would be no longer needed. As soon as Frederic heard of the retreat of Charles Edward into Scotland, he hastened to offer his support, but expressly explained to his ministers that he aimed only to make his record right, knowing that his offer would not now be accepted.³ "Happy," adds his majesty, "are they who, having secured their own safety, can tranquilly look upon the embarrassment and anxiety of others."

¹ Eichel to Podewils, 24 January, 1746.

² Frederic to Andrié, 26 February, to Podewils, 1 and 2 March, 1746.

³ Frederic to Podewils, 3 March, 1746.

From such perplexities no one of the remaining belligerents was wholly free. England succeeded in expelling the pretender; but during the interval ^{England and Holland.} the peril of Holland, exposed as she was to the vengeance of France, placed the cabinet in a grave dilemma. To the vague promise of Pelham and Newcastle to give all the aid in their power, and their demand for a declaration of war by Holland against France, the republic replied by a threat to make its own terms with Louis, and retire completely from the struggle.¹ In February, 1746, the states actually sent count Wassenaer to Paris on a mission of peace. He found D'Argenson and the other ministers favorable to a general pacification on terms which implied, indeed, some recognition of their victories in the Netherlands, but were not specially onerous to Holland. Their demands were chiefly for the right to fortify Dunkirk, and for a slight rectification of the French frontier on the side of the Austrian Netherlands. But these proposals had to be referred to the several states of the republic, which were by no means harmonious in their views, and he submitted to England for her opinion. All this took time, and involved delay.² Next came the refusal of Frederic to interfere, and finally the dismissal of the Pelham cabinet by the king. But Bath and Granville failed to organize a ministry in the face of a hostile parliament, and after a few days the old government returned to power, gave fresh assurances to Holland, and arranged for the dispatch of an Austrian corps to the Netherlands. This was of course the very purpose for which England had supported the peace of Dresden.

But the empress' hand was not yet wholly free. During the course of the renewed struggle for Silesia her affairs in Italy had steadily declined, and they continued to require the most strenuous exertions for months after the

¹ Coxe's *Pelham*, i. ch. ix.

² See Beer, *Holland und der öst. Erbfolge-Krieg*, p. 48 et seq.

conclusion of the treaty of Dresden. Although the heavy reënforcements sent to the peninsula early in the year gave her again an advantage, this was rendered precarious by the suspicious conduct of the king of Sardinia, the intrigues of the French, the harsh policy of the Austrian generals, the hostility of the native population, and the limits of military action drawn by the treaty of Worms. The situation required, therefore, constant vigilance. And in the Netherlands the Austrian and the allied armies met only uninterrupted disaster. Prince Charles, who, in spite of his well-ascertained incapacity, was placed in command of a large force sent to check the progress of the French, proved no more successful against marshal Saxe than he had been against the king of Prussia. Brussels, Mechlin, Louvain, Antwerp, Mons, Charleroi, Namur, were taken one after another; and by the end of September Luxemburg and Limburg were the only parts of the Austrian Netherlands not in the hands of the French. The single pitched battle fought at this time, that of Rocoux in October, ended in the total defeat of the allies. The flag of France was carried high. But the failure of the attempt to detach the king of Sardinia, the progress of the Austrian arms in Italy, the threatened defection of Ferdinand VI. of Spain, and English victories in America and on the ocean, were circumstances which modified the exultation of the French court. Louis was still one of the princes to whom the prospect of peace was welcome.

These events did not of course pass unobserved at Berlin. But Frederic's interest was now less direct than it had been in the interval after the first Silesian war; for a second defeat had rendered the house of Austria less formidable, and the present emperor was not, like the unfortunate Charles VII., an acknowledged client of Prussia. The king still kept his envoys busy. Indeed, having now no war on his hands,

Fortunes
of the war

Frederic's
diplomatic
activity.

he fairly overwhelmed them with problems and commissions on every sort of subject. His own diplomatic letters for the year 1746 fill half a volume. But these were for the greater part on matters of secondary importance. The details of the treaty of Dresden which still required negotiation; the guaranty of the treaty by the other powers; the renewal of diplomatic relations between Berlin and Vienna; the rival efforts of Frederic and Maria Theresa for influence in the Empire, — these and a multitude of other even less weighty questions, with which this active king harassed his envoys, taught them by daily lessons how hard was the lot of a Prussian diplomatist. Nor were they ever for an instant secure of the favor of their exacting task-master. Savage rebukes awaited the slightest neglect or even the slightest misconception of orders; and it was as dangerous to await instructions, when discretion ought to be assumed, as to assume a discretion which failed to meet the king's approval. To Andrić, for example, he wrote on one occasion: "I have only to say to you that I find the reply which you made to lord Harrington . . . very injudicious; and his silence ought to have shown you how much he was offended by your presumption, highly unbecoming in the envoy of a neutral power. Have more care in the future about what you say and do."¹ But Frederic never hesitated to acknowledge a service rendered by these officials; and as zealous patriots they could doubtless take an unselfish delight, notwithstanding their own hardships, in the firm and vigorous tone of Prussian diplomacy.

Soon after the ratification of the Christmas treaties, the vacant Prussian missions at Dresden and Vienna were again filled. To the Saxon capital Frederic sent the privy-councillor Klinggræffen, who Instructions for Klinggræffen at Dresden. for three years had followed the itinerant court of the em-

¹ 6 July, 1746. In the original: "aussi vous ordonné-je de mieux penser, à l'avenir, à ce que vous dites et faites."

peror Charles VII., and after his death remained another year at Munich as envoy to the young elector of Bavaria. His instructions are dated the thirtieth of January, 1746. They made it his duty to assure the elector that the treaty of peace had completely obliterated the past, and that the king of Prussia had no warmer desire than to live on terms of the most perfect friendship with his majesty. Count Brühl was to be convinced that no resentment was felt for the share which he had had in the recent estrangement of the two courts; it was hoped that that minister would use the credit, which he enjoyed, in the work of restoring harmony. The line of conduct which the envoy had to adopt toward his colleagues of the diplomatic corps was also indicated. The minister of Russia, whose unfavorable sentiments were known, was to be treated with a feigned cordiality, as if he were the agent of a government in whose friendship the utmost confidence was felt. With the envoy of France only relations of formal civility were to be held; and, while protestations of the sincere regards of Frederic for his most Christian majesty were not to be spared, they should be couched only in vague and general terms, which could give rise to no suspicions. But the representatives of the naval powers could be treated with less reserve, and assured of the king's perfect devotion to the interest of their masters.¹ This agrees with orders sent at the same time to Andrié. He was informed that the king now regarded his interests as inseparably united with those of England for the welfare of Europe, and was charged to hold a corresponding language in his interviews with the ministers.²

The new envoy at Vienna was count Otho Podewils, who had lately been relieved at the Hague. His instructions open with the usual details about matters of form, such as the presentation of his

The Vienna mission.

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, v. 12-20.

² Frederic to Andrié, 1 February, 1746.

credentials, the visits of ceremony to make, the compliments to pay to the members of the reigning family, the tone to adopt toward the other foreign envoys; and then specify three general objects which were to engage his principal attention. The first was to discover the real sentiments of the empress toward Prussia; to learn whether she loyally accepted the settlement of Dresden as final, or only awaited an opportunity to repudiate it; and especially to inquire what truth there was in the reports of secret intrigues between the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg hostile to the interests of the house of Brandenburg. The discovery of the feelings of the empress and her ministers on the subject of a general peace, what sacrifices they were willing to make, whether they were disposed to conclude with France in order to fall with all their forces upon Prussia, formed the second point in Podewils' instructions. The third concerned the court of Dresden. Since that court refused to furnish the naval powers with the auxiliary troops promised in the treaty of Warsaw, and was even reported to be engaged in negotiations with France in an opposite sense, it might be regarded somewhat coldly at Vienna; but there was much duplicity in the manœuvres of the Saxons, and they might soon seek a reconciliation with the empress in order to concoct with her, and the court of St. Petersburg, new designs against Prussia. For any signs of such a change of front Podewils was to watch with the utmost vigilance. The paper closed with the enumeration of the several questions of detail, still pending between Berlin and Dresden, which would engage the envoy's attention, and the many points connected with the internal polity and resources of Austria, on which he was to gather and send information.¹ This was supplemented a few days later by further in-

¹ "Instruction pour mon ministre d'état, le comte de Podewils, allant à Vienne en qualité d'envoyé extraordinaire et de ministre plenipotentiaire." Berlin, 1 May, 1746, *Polit. Corresp.*, v. 78-84.

structions, drawn up by count Podewils himself, after an interview with the king. Nominally they were only to supply certain omissions in the first set. But they are somewhat significant, and therefore deserve mention, for the far deeper tone of distrust which pervades them, and the greater refinement of the arts suggested to the count for probing the secrets of Austrian policy. Otherwise they add little to the earlier orders.¹

The line of conduct thus prescribed to Klinggræffen and Podewils shows Frederic's mental attitude toward the two courts, with which he had lately been at war. It is true they show also, in a wider sense, an original and permanent ingredient of his nature. His want of confidence in August and Maria Theresa, and the ministers of both, was in a certain degree only a particular expression or direction given to his general distrust of human integrity; only the scepticism which was revealed in the earliest of his political essays, and never ceased to color his philosophy of statecraft; which governed his relations to England, France, and all the powers of Europe; which led him to scrutinize with equal care the reports of an ambassador at the capital of a great prince, and the accounts of an exciseman sitting in the gates of one of his own towns. But in the case of Austria and Saxony his doubts had of course an additional source beyond that furnished by his natural habits of mind. Mere defeat in war does not always make the victim the implacable foe of the victor. The present generation has seen a war between Prussia and Austria, in which the latter was again the loser, followed after a short interval by relations of quite unusual friendliness, and an almost uniform coöperation in all the leading questions of European policy. Some part of this may indeed be due to the superior wisdom of Francis Joseph and his advisers.

¹ "Supplément aux instructions," etc. Potsdam, 15 May, 1746, *Polit. Corresp.*, v. 89-91.

But it must also be considered that the expulsion of Austria from the German system, which followed her defeat in 1866, though it implied a certain loss of prestige and position, was in effect her release from a responsibility to which no real advantage corresponded, and which was a source of weakness rather than of strength; that it was accompanied by no loss of territory; and, perhaps most important of all, that it was instinctively recognized as the final act in a long and tragical drama, of which the leading motive, to use the approved language of the critics, was the contest of two great powers for the supremacy in Germany. The contrast between these circumstances and those which marked the two Silesian wars is at once apparent. If the battle of Mollwitz was the opening of the play, the peace of Dresden itself, after four other great victories for Prussia, was still only the close of the first act, and left the great German issue an unsettled problem for the future. The concessions of Austria were extorted, according to the view which prevailed at Vienna, by a vassal, hitherto privileged to obey, from a suzerain having an ancient right to command; by a breach of faith and a breach of loyalty; by the treachery of an ally and the rebellion of a subordinate. These circumstances, which belonged to the history of the time, and this feeling, which tinctured all the negotiations of Maria Theresa, were no secret to Frederic. He knew that he had planted the seeds of a long quarrel. If he sometimes hoped that the crop would not ripen during his life; if he made formal tenders of friendship and cordiality; if in the interval of peace he wrote verse and heard plays, communed with the choicest spirits whom he could gather about him, and exercised in every direction the forces of his lively intellect, his political watchfulness was never lulled; for he regarded Austria, the principal victim of his arms, and Saxony, which by espousing her cause had shared her disgrace, as enemies who were angered rather than pacified by defeat,

and who would seize the first opportunity for revenge. The real mission of Klinggræffen and Podewils was, therefore, not to strive after an impossible millennium, but to give warning of the inevitable chaos.

It was not, however, from Vienna or Dresden that the first danger was apprehended. The darkest cloud at this time was in another part of the horizon. The armaments ordered by the empress Elizabeth for the relief of Saxony had not only not been dissolved, but had even been increased since the conclusion of peace. It was vaguely known at Berlin that further negotiations were in progress between the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg. But their precise object was still uncertain, and, in connection with the reported concentration of Bosnian mercenaries in Poland, they caused the liveliest solicitude. Mardefeld himself felt little alarm, but the king was not convinced by his reassuring dispatches.¹ He addressed urgent instructions on the subject to his envoys at London, Vienna, Dresden, Stockholm. He even seems to have cherished the hope, not perhaps that England, out of friendship for Prussia, would interpose her good offices at St. Petersburg, but at least that her refusal to do so would give him a valuable diplomatic leverage for the future.² But this question itself was only settled, even for a time, by a direct remonstrance addressed to the Russian court.

The remonstrance, like many other Prussian compositions of the period, had a polyglot form, partly German, partly French. The confidential instructions to the envoy were besides separated by a postscript from the formal inquiry which was to be read to count Bestuschef. The postscript required the grand-chancellor to explain categorically why such large armaments were forming on the Prussian frontier, whether they were

¹ Frederic to Podewils, 27, 28 February, to Eichel, 5 February, 1746.

² Eichel to Podewils, 16 February, 12 April, 1746.

aimed at the states of the empress' faithful ally, the king of Prussia. But the body of the dispatch to Mardefeld was of a more confidential nature. The envoy was directed carefully to observe, while reading the dispatch, the countenance of Bestuschef, in order presumably to report whether the grand-chancellor flushed with the righteous indignation of an honest man, or turned pale at the exposure of his guilty schemes.¹

The note was to be presented only in case the Russian preparations should reach a dangerous point. Mardefeld seems never to have discovered that point with his own eyes; but Frederic's alarm became so great that six weeks later he ordered the dispatch to be read confidentially to Bestuschef. The envoy was, however, enjoined to make no threats, and delicately to ascertain what sum would compensate the grand-chancellor for a response favorable to Prussia.² Bestuschef seems to have given only a vague assurance that nothing unfriendly to Prussia was proposed. But events had in the mean time relieved Frederic's anxiety, and Mardefeld was ordered to suspend diplomatic measures for a time.³ Not long afterwards the Russians troops were withdrawn into the interior, and in September Mardefeld himself was finally recalled.

The alarm
subsides.

While these events were taking place, the negotiations between Austria and Russia reached a conclusion highly favorable to the former. A treaty of alliance, signed on the second of June, 1746, provided for armed assistance to be furnished by either party in case the other should be attacked, and authorized Maria Theresa, if the aggressor should be Prussia, to treat

Treaty of
St. Petersburg,
1746.

¹ Frederic to Mardefeld, 30 April, 1746.

² "lui tâter le pouls sur la gratification qu'il aurait à attendre de moi, pourvu qu'il ne voulût point nuire à mes intérêts." Frederic to Mardefeld, 12 June, 1746.

³ Same to the same, 22 July, 1746.

the question of Silesia as reopened, and the province as subject to reconquest. It is therefore clear that the treaty could in certain contingencies be turned against Frederic. Ten years later it was maintained, in an official memoir by Frederic's ministers, that the treaty was directly aimed at Prussia, since it was made easy at any time, by provoking that state to hostilities, to create the situation in which the cession of Silesia was to be regarded as void; and a number of historians have since taken the same view.¹ It is admitted that the body of the treaty was sufficiently innocent. It was in fact officially communicated by Russia to the court of Berlin, and pronounced by Frederic to be harmless on its face.² But the existence of secret articles was intimated by the marquis d'Argenson, and one of these, the fourth, when discovered some years afterwards, was found to contain the conditional danger for Silesia. It is true that Austrian partisans still contend that the treaty, even with the secret articles, was not intentionally hostile to Prussia. But lord Hyndford is a good witness for the contrary. He was kept well informed about the course of the negotiations, apparently by no other than Pretlak, the Austrian envoy; and it is a reasonable inference that he only voiced the sentiments of that personage and his court when, in confidential letters, he exulted over the treaty as one which was principally aimed at the king of Prussia with a view to wresting Silesia from his grasp.³

The only feature of the public treaty which aroused

¹ See Hertzberg, *Recueil des déductions*, vol. i. p. 5; Schoell, ii. 397-402; Herrmann, *Gesch. Russlands*, v. 94; Droysen, V. iii. 131-136. The treaty was to have no application to the existing war.

² Frederic to Podewils, 18 September, 1746; to Klinggræffen, at Dresden, 6 May, 1747. This dispatch fell into the hands of Bestuschef. Herrmann, v. 198.

³ Hyndford to Grote, 6 May, and to Steinberg, 10 June, 1746, in Borkowsky, pp. 98, 99. The text of the fourth article is in Hertzberg, *Recueil*, i. 30-32, and Schoell, ii. 398-401. Arneth, iii. 333-335, seems to depart from his usual candor in discussing this subject.

Frederic's suspicions was an article providing for the eventual accession of the king of England as elector of Hanover. But why as elector of Hanover, inquired Frederic of Andrié? — a question to which it was, from the nature of things, impossible to obtain other than vague and unsatisfactory answers.¹

A year later England concluded with Russia a treaty of a somewhat different nature. It was provided that, in return for an annual subsidy of one hundred thousand pounds sterling, the empress should hold a Russian corps of thirty thousand men at the disposition of England for use in the war then raging.² By a supplementary convention the following November, Holland was admitted as a principal, and the auxiliary force fixed at thirty-seven thousand. The empress then began promptly to put the promised corps on a war footing.

England
hires Rus-
sian troops.

In the mean time Prussia found a friend in Sweden, with which power a defensive alliance was signed at Stockholm on the 29th of May, 1747.³ It contained reciprocal guaranties of territory, and pledges of military aid to be furnished by either party in case of attack upon the other. A separate article regulated the details of the assistance. This was evidently not a very imposing transaction, yet it is characteristic of the delicate condition of the public mind in Europe that it was treated as an act which might seriously affect the fortune of states. Frederic exulted over it as over a great victory.⁴ Pelham had watched the progress of the negotiations with anxiety,⁵ and Russia had opposed them at every step with all the means in her power.

Prusso-
Swedish
treaty of
alliance.

¹ Eichel to Podewils, and Frederic to the same, 18 September, 1746.

² Treaty of 23 June, 1747. Wenck, ii. 244 et seq.; Hardwicke Papers, vol. lxxvii.

³ Wenck, ii. 235-243.

⁴ Frederic to the princess-royal of Sweden, his sister, 7 June; the same to Chambrier, 20 June, 1747.

⁵ Coxe's *Pelham*, i. 372.

The Russian activity, though not in itself immediately dangerous, had elements of danger which emphasized the importance for Prussia of a general peace. Such plans as Elizabeth entertained were dependent on the general situation of Europe. Her personal hatred of Frederic was intense, and her order could at any time set the legions of Russia in motion; but it was especially in connection with the forces of England, Austria, and Holland, and with the advantages which a general war gave her, that she was likely to be formidable. And aside from that, the vicissitudes of the pending struggle, with the large armies which it kept in the field, might at any time bring forth serious problems for Prussia.

The policy of Frederic was therefore to encourage a general peace. It was known that his mediation Frederic and the war was at the service of the belligerent powers whenever it could be given with any reasonable hopes of success, and without compromising in any way the neutrality of his own state. But the terms which were proposed by the one side and the other failed to satisfy this obvious requirement. They all alike aimed to make Prussia a party to the struggle, rather than an arbitrator between the parties. Such a position the king wisely refused to accept. He put aside the most tempting projects, such as the stadtholdership of Holland for himself, or one of his brothers, and the cession of the Austrian Netherlands to Prussia, as full of dangers which the exhausted state of the country made it unsafe to risk.¹ Even madame de Pompadour, the new mistress of Louis XV., employed her arts to draw Prussia into the play; but Chambrier gave her an evasive answer, which Frederic said was spoken as from his own soul.² The king's desire

¹ Frederic to Ammon, 20 May, 2 October, 1747; Ranke, *xxix.* 226.

² Droysen, V. *iii.* 434, 485. Frederic to Chambrier, 26 March, 1748.

for a general peace was therefore always controlled by a prudent regard for his own separate interests.

The character of the peace, too, was of great weight in his calculations, and he especially dreaded a complete triumph of the allies over France. The victories of marshal Saxe were therefore welcome to him. But as the French were weary of the war, had suffered reverses in America, and were in great pecuniary trouble, he was constantly apprehensive lest some sudden change of fortune, and an unequal peace, should endanger his own position.

Meantime the efforts of the belligerents to put an end to the war were hardly intermitted for an hour. Congress of Breda. Separate and secret negotiations were in progress on every side, but the most auspicious outlook was furnished by those of Holland in Paris, which finally led in October, 1746, to the Congress of Breda. France and the two naval powers sent commissioners; the delegates of Austria, Spain, and Sardinia, though not admitted to the formal conferences, were kept informed of the course of events; and for months the English and Dutch envoys labored almost against hope. But in the midst of the controversies France suddenly declared war against the United Provinces, and followed it up with an invading army. The congress soon afterwards dissolved, leaving nothing to show for its labors. The efforts of Maria Theresa for a private accommodation with Spain, and the attempts of Saxony to reconcile Austria and France, met with no better success,

The only striking change resulting from these varied negotiations, which seems to concern the subject of this work, was a closer intimacy between France and Saxony. This was founded at first upon the promise of subsidies to be paid out of the French treasury into the empty purse of August.¹ In February of the next year, 1747,

¹ 21 April, 1746.

this intimacy was further strengthened by a tie of marriage between the two houses ; for when the first wife of the dauphin died in 1746, Louis and the French court cast about for a successor, and, after passing in review all the eligible candidates for the honor, fixed at length upon the Saxon princess Maria Josephine, daughter of August III. Neither of these measures led Saxony into the French camp as an open ally against Austria. Neither was aimed directly at Prussia ; and indeed Frederic wrote in at least one letter that he himself had suggested the claims of the Saxon princess, and that he preferred an alliance between Saxony and France to an alliance between Saxony and Austria.¹ But the friendship thus founded proved to have a vitality greater even than its authors could have foreseen. It remained an active element in the wars and the diplomacy of Europe, even throughout all the changes in the government of France, until the middle of the present century. It follows, too, that the Polish policy of France now began to take a direction more in harmony with the interests and aspirations of the Saxon court.

Thus passed the years 1746 and 1747. A revolution in Holland restored the house of Orange to power ; but, although unity was thus given to the military operations of the republic, vigor was still wanting, and the French pressed victoriously onward. In Italy the fortunes of war oscillated from one side to the other without any decisive result. The financial distress was general, and it seemed evident that the struggle must soon end from the actual exhaustion of all the parties.

Early in 1748 the allies made a last desperate effort to throw an overwhelming force against the enemy. By a

¹ Frederic to Andrié, 7 February, 1747 ; cf. D'Argenson, ii. 146. It appears that Frederic's own sister Amelia was seriously mentioned, but the difference of religion was one obstacle out of many which made this choice impossible.

treaty signed on the twenty-sixth of January, they agreed to place one hundred and fifty-six thousand men, ^{The last campaign.} Austrians, English, and Dutch, in the Netherlands, while Maria Theresa and the king of Sardinia were to furnish together ninety thousand for service in Italy. England and Holland were to increase their fleets. England was to continue the payment of subsidies to Austria and Sardinia.¹ But a more ominous event was the appearance of the Russian corps which, in fulfilment of the treaty of the previous year, now entered Bohemia, and prepared for an advance to the Rhine. The response of the French was renewed vigor in Holland.

The march of the Russians, of which Frederic had early news, caused him very little disquietude. He reasoned that, as they were in the pay of ^{The Russian auxiliary corps.} England and Holland, their destination and employment would be controlled, not by the court of Vienna, whose good intentions might be doubted, but by powers which were specially anxious not to provoke him. In this sense he wrote to his envoys.² Some of his letters even expressed the hope that the incident could be turned to his own profit; for, as he observed to count Finckenstein, who succeeded Mardefeld at St. Petersburg, the Russian chancellor had undertaken a hazardous enterprise in sending troops into Germany, and ought for that reason to be somewhat more conciliatory toward Prussia.³ Indeed, Frederic made one distinct gain from the affair. General Keith, a Scotch exile, who had long been in the Russian service, but who, at the instance of lord ^{Keith.} Hyndford,⁴ was denied the command of the expeditionary force, threw up his commission; offered his services to

¹ Treaty of the Hague, Wenck, ii. 410-416.

² Frederic to count Podewils, at Vienna, 12 and 27 January, 1748.

³ Frederic to Finckenstein, 1, 19 January, 1748.

⁴ Hyndford to Steinberg, 10 January, 1747.

Frederic ; and accepted a field-marshal's commission in the Prussian army. The value of this acquisition was shown in some of the bloodiest battles of Prussia's history.

But the grand army of the allies was never formed, and the Russian auxiliary corps never reached the seat of war. Overtures for peace were renewed before the campaign was opened. The approach of the Russian force on the one side, and the progress of the French arms in Holland on the other, strengthened the general desire for peace, and made it easy to agree upon a congress of all the belligerent powers. It was appointed to meet in April at Aix-la-Chapelle. To this congress Prussia, not being a belligerent, sent no formal delegate ; but her interests were represented there by the councillor Ammon, envoy at the Hague, one of the most adroit of Frederic's younger diplomatists.¹

The congress early revealed a wide divergence of views between the different members. The learned Austrian historian, whose candor one cannot in general too highly commend, is perhaps justified from his point of view in asserting that this divergence arose out of the reckless desire of the naval powers to conclude peace as soon as possible, without regard to the just susceptibilities or the treaty rights of Maria Theresa. He compares the situation in 1748 to that of 1712, and the policy of lord Chesterfield, who had just taken the place of Harrington, to the treachery of Bolingbroke and Harley.² It is certain, too, that Austria had met the wishes of the English cabinet by making terms with Frederic, and that the war had since taken a course more in harmony with the imperial aspirations of England. But the view of the ministers and the subjects of

Congress of
Aix-la-
Chapelle.

¹ His instructions, *Polit. Corresp.*, vi. 97-99.

² Arneth, iii. 339. But Chesterfield retired in February, forced out of the cabinet, according to general report, because he was too zealous for peace. Cf. Coxe's *Pelham*, i. 388, 399.

George II. was that English lives and English money were being sacrificed at a ruinous rate to the arrogance and ambition of the house of Austria, and they were heartily tired of such a policy. When marshal Saxe laid siege to Maestricht, the Dutch were thrown into a panic. The Russians advanced into Franconia, and Louis XV. felt in his mind a new desire for peace. Only Maria Theresa still remained firm. To the preliminaries of peace adopted by France, England, and Holland, on the last day of April, her envoy, count Kaunitz, opposed a strong protest. They exacted, he said, a double sacrifice from Austria. They required the surrender of Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla, in Italy, to Don Philip of Spain, and at the same time insisted on the cessions, which had been promised to the king of Sardinia for his aid in keeping Don Philip out of Italy. His mistress was therefore willing to grant the Spanish prince an establishment from her Italian possessions only on condition that the cessions named in the treaty of Worms be revoked. "Even then," added Kaunitz, with a touch of pathos, "nobody will lose anything by the peace except her majesty alone."¹ This protest was dated the fourth of May. On the twenty-fifth of the same month Kaunitz returned to the subject with an objection to the proposed guaranty of Silesia and Glatz. It was invidious, he said, to select for ratification the cessions already made and religiously observed by Austria, and he was instructed to insist that the whole treaty of Dresden, and not simply those parts of it favorable to Prussia, be included in the general peace. But two days later he announced the provisional adhesion of Austria to the preliminaries, and his readiness to coöperate in a final treaty of peace on that basis.

¹ Wenck, ii. 321-323. For the treaty of Worms, see vol. i. p. 221. The cessions, including Placentia, which it was now proposed to transfer to Don Philip, were Vigevano, the greater part of the territory of Pavia, and Finale.

In the person of Kaunitz appeared on this occasion a diplomatist who was destined soon to acquire, and for forty years to hold, a position of unrivalled influence among the ministers of the Austrian court. He was only thirty-seven years old when he was sent to Aix-la-Chapelle to cross swords with the representatives of all the powers of Europe. He was a fop, a profligate, and a cynic; was vain and arrogant; and, as his frankness was no respecter of persons, he did not always spare even the queen herself. When, in an official audience, she gently remonstrated with him upon his riotous living, he coolly reminded her that he had come to discuss her affairs, not his own.¹ He was in short one of those men, frequent in history, whose characters, lives, and careers puzzle the judgment as with a paradox. Like Cæsar and Pitt and Frederic himself, he was in his youth full of small conceits and vanities. Yet beneath these, and always kept completely at his service, was a cold, dispassionate, penetrating reason, a singular clearness of view, and a relentless tenacity of purpose. Maria Theresa early discovered the germs of talent and of usefulness in the young man, who openly laughed at the pedantry of her superannuated advisers, her Sinzendorfs and Bartensteins. He had first been sent on a mission to the court of Turin, whence his reports were models of clearness, cogency, and intelligence. Next he was stationed at Brussels, and from there was sent to the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. He was a good hater of Prussia, and on this occasion gave the first hints of his almost revolutionary plan of national revenge.

After many interruptions and long delays, the treaty was finally concluded on the eighteenth of October. The general principle adopted was that of mutual restitutions of conquered territory, and

Treaty of
Aix-la-Cha-
pelle.

¹ Vehse, *Memoirs of the Court of Austria*, translated by Franz Demmler, London, 1856, vol.ii. p. 192.

the restoration of the status quo ante bellum. But the exception made in the preliminaries against the most innocent of the belligerents was retained in the final treaty. Maria Theresa had already ceded Silesia and Glatz, two rich and loyal provinces, to the king of Prussia, and valuable Italian territories to the house of Savoy. She was now forced to cede the duchies of Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla to Don Philip of Spain, reserving only the right of eventual reversion. The Prussian conquests were guaranteed absolutely by all the signatory powers. England had to return the island of Cape Breton to France, and in the treaty no mention was made of the right of search claimed by Spain, which was the earliest cause of hostilities.¹

Thus ended the war of the Austrian Succession. In its origin and its motives one of the most wicked of all the many conflicts which ambition and perfidy have provoked in Europe, it excites a peculiarly mournful interest by the gross inequality in the rewards and penalties which fortune assigned to the leading actors. Prussia, Spain, and Sardinia were all endowed out of the estates of the house of Hapsburg. But the electoral house of Bavaria, the most sincere and the most deserving of all the claimants to that vast inheritance, not only received no increase of territory, but even nearly lost its own patrimonial possessions; while France, after sacrificing thousands of lives and millions of treasure, was enriched only by a great name to add to her roll of marshals, and new victories to write in the temple of glory. But the most trying problem is still that offered by the misfortunes of the queen of Hungary. For that problem no military critic of battles and campaigns, no historian fortified by labor in all the archives of Europe, no social

Conclusion.

¹ The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle is given, with a mass of connected documents, by Wenck, vol. ii. The Prussian guaranty is in article XXII.

philosopher with his statistics and generalizations, no censor with his gloomy rules of penance and retribution, has ever offered an adequate solution. One thing at least is certain. The verdict of history, as expressed by the public opinion, and by the vast majority of writers, in every country except Prussia, upholds the justice of the queen's cause, and condemns the coalition that was formed against her. On this point the descendants of the men who conquered on the field of Dettingen agree with the descendants of the men who fought with marshal Saxe at Fontenoy. No historical judgment has a broader basis in the world's assent than that which, neglecting all the recriminations exchanged between national writers over minor issues, makes Maria Theresa the victim of an atrocious scheme of spoliation; which admires her heroic courage, and the combination in her of the virtues of the woman with the virtues of the ruler; and which charitably condones, in view of her trials and her provocations, the weaknesses from which she was not exempt, and the errors which she could not entirely avoid.

CHAPTER III.

RECUPERATION AND REFORM.

THE decade which followed the conclusion of the second peace with Austria is often described as including the halcyon years of Frederic's reign. This ^{Halcyon years.} was the period, say the historians, in which the nation, fired by the triumphs of the recent past, and exulting in the strength of its new situation, learned at least to admire the man who had shown the way to victory; when great reforms were planned in many departments of state; when diplomatists paid their court to the powerful king; when philosophers were welcomed by the royal patron of learning; when poets declaimed their verses before the prince who had invoked the muses even by the light of his camp-fire on the field of battle, and now in the hour of peace raised them more sumptuous temples, and worshipped them with a more perfect devotion. In this glowing picture there is perhaps some excess of color, while the social shades, which would have made it truer to nature, are rigorously suppressed. But the excuse may be made that it is customary to allow much freedom to patriotic artists who paint in the bright glare of royalty, and that the leading features of the work are treated with reasonable fidelity. In these years Frederic was undoubtedly favored by many circumstances fitted to make his position felicitous and enviable. It was an age of showy splendor in letters, art, politics, and science; an age full of certain kinds of glory; an age marked by a

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILOSOPHER OF SANS SOUCI.

THE work of Frederic the Second in the serious affairs of state, in war, administration, and diplomacy, was such as no other ruler of the time performed, or attempted to perform. But his habits of life were so systematic that, after all this, he still retained a leisure greater, perhaps, than any other ruler enjoyed. The strict division of his time again, and his unrivalled self-control, enabled him to dismiss from his mind, when the hour for recreation arrived, the most urgent and weighty official problems,—the plan of a campaign, the reform of an institution, the negotiation of a treaty,—and to give himself up with complete relaxation to the enjoyment of his well-earned rest. This rest was in part, however, only a change from one kind of work to another. If the picture of Frederic on the battlefield, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, excites the most admiration, and the picture of the same prince as an administrator, toiling patiently in the cabinet, commands the most respect, stranger and more curious emotions are aroused by the sight of that multiform activity, and that wide range of intellectual interests, which marked his hours of diversion.

Frederic's
habits of
life.

Like his own father, and many other rulers of that age, Frederic rose very early in the morning, and plunged at once into the affairs of state. The flute alone enjoyed the right of prior, though very brief attention. Then he gave an hour or more to a careful study of the reports which had been sent in for his personal examination from

the higher civil or military officials; snatched a hasty breakfast of coffee and fruit; and, perhaps after another air on his favorite instrument, was ready for the more serious ordeal of the day. A cabinet secretary brought in the complete budget of state business, which had accumulated during the previous twenty-four hours. The greater part of these papers were read simply in abstract; and the secretary, after noting down the king's orders, unless he himself, as was often the case, scrawled them in laconic terms on the margin, then retired to dress the result into official shape. If the occasion required, an adjutant was admitted to make reports, or receive instructions; other officials, even the ministers, rarely had the honor of a personal interview. About ten o'clock the commandant came to get the parole for the day. After this the king drew on an old and faded uniform, much discolored by snuff; witnessed the parade of some favorite regiment; rode or walked or granted audiences until noon. At twelve o'clock the dinner was served.¹

Such was Frederic's order of life, seldom greatly varied, for the forenoon of every day, alike at Berlin, at Potsdam, on his tours of inspection through the provinces, and, so far as possible, even in camp during his military campaigns. The state first claimed his time; and it was a point of duty to clear up each day's budget as it came, leaving no unfinished work to accumulate. Under the system of government which prevailed, the daily product of reports, petitions, inquiries, and recommendations was enormous; and Frederic's own rule required all documents of importance to be submitted to him. These were usually written in a pedantic official German, still called in derision the chancelry style, of which he understood nothing whatever. They descended to the most trivial and even ludicrous details. But Frederic had

¹ Büsching, *Character Friedrichs des Zweiten*, pp. 24-27; Preuss, i. 344 et seq.

two allied though not inseparable gifts,—power of application and quickness of apprehension; he exacted equal diligence of his clerks; and, while he respected diligence alone so far as it was useful, he had no patience with dulness which was slow to catch his meaning, and thus wasted his precious time. As an absolute ruler, he had, however, complete freedom of choice among the members of the civil service. The political system, too, which threw all of these details upon the king, ensured him at the same time against the immediate consequences of error. There was no ministry to advise with that authority which, in constitutional states, resembles the power to command. No parliament could arraign the policy and measures of the executive. Even public opinion was only tardily aroused, was timid and halting in expression, and never served as a check upon the conduct of current affairs. His own promptness of judgment, the intelligence of his assistants, and perfect freedom from accountability to any recognized organ of criticism and control, thus enabled Frederic to complete the morning's work usually in less than two hours, and often in one.

The noonday dinner commonly reunited a number of guests who, by the king's command, were admitted to share his strictly regulated hospitality. Frederic was his own butler and his own steward. The accounts of cellar and kitchen were regularly inspected, and the slightest extravagance met instant rebuke. An ^{His table.} economist, not an epicure, revised the daily menu. The result was a dinner free from any excess of elegance or profusion, yet fairly good, according to Voltaire, for a country in which there was no game, no decent meat, and no spring chickens. The conversation was lively; and if the bottle made few journeys about the circle, there was little of that debauchery which marked the tabagie of the previous reign.¹

¹ Voltaire, *Œuvres*, lxiv. 209; *Diaries and Correspondence of James*

The afternoon was usually given to literary work. First, however, the cabinet secretary brought such papers as had been drafted in pursuance of orders received at the morning session, and were now ready for the royal signature. They were signed in a rapid, flowing, and not ungraceful hand.¹ Very often the king added an autograph postscript or marginal comment, which emphasized the body of the document, or supplied some omission, or notified the official concerned in its execution that his head would pay the penalty of any neglect of duty. But this formality took no great amount of time, and for two or three hours Frederic then toiled at his manuscripts, in the strictest seclusion, and with all the earnestness of any literary drudge of Grub street.

Afternoons
with the
muses.

The chronological table of Frederic's writings, prepared by his editor, Preuss, may be consulted for a summary view of his literary activity during the period now under consideration.² Even a simple enumeration of the titles is enough to excite wonder or alarm. The list contains odes, epistles, and comedies, eulogies and elegies, dissertations in prose and dissertations in verse, essays upon the most varied topics of morals and philosophy, historical compositions, and even technical treatises on the art and science of war, which the editor of his works chose to regard as literature. The "Palladion," the humorous epic of which Valori was the hero, is ascribed to the year 1749.³ That was otherwise a busy year, for it saw the production of no less than forty works, many of them of considerable length, and one or two even of ad-

Frederic's
literary
activity.

Harris, first Earl of Malmesbury, London, 1844, vol. i. pp. 4, 5; *Thiébauld, Mes Souvenirs*, vol. i.; *Büsching, Character Friedrichs II.* pp. 10-14.

¹ The French signature was "Fédéric," the German "Friderich," both of them being forms devised by the king.

² In *Œuvres de Frédéric*, end of vol. xxx.

³ See Tuttle's *History of Prussia*, vol. ii. p. 315.

mitted merit. In an epistle to count Finckenstein the author sets forth the superiority of virtue to wit.¹ In another he pronounces a malediction upon the wretch who first practised the art of deception; and who, crushing truth under his feet, used its sacred mantle to cover his own treachery.²

The moral and didactic poems invite, however, a line of criticism which it is charity to avoid, especially since they are not the most successful even in a His poems. literary sense. The king is far happier in his satirical efforts, where the wit is keen, the license unrestrained, and the versification not without skill. D'Argenson has a good word for some of them.³ Voltaire must have read at least those which he corrected. But they are all alike destitute of real poetical spirit. Frederic had little imagination; and, although he composed verses not much worse than some which had carried their authors into the French academy, they were still only the artificial products of a man of talent, unendowed with the divine gift of song. He followed closely, both as to form and as to matter, the vicious standard of the age, which even the genius of Voltaire scarcely rescued from contempt. The gods and goddesses of antiquity stride up and down his pages. The muses are invoked with offensive familiarity. Cicero and Seneca declaim in stilted heroics; the passions are all personified in capitals; and Homer hides his head with shame at seeing himself obscured by Voltaire.⁴

¹ La vertu préférable à l'esprit.

² Discours sur la fausseté, *Œuvres*, xi. 79 et seq.

³ *Mémoires*, v. 115, 116.

⁴ . . . Se voyant obscurci par Voltaire,
Dans son poëme avec soin se cachait.

Épître à Jordan, 1750, *Œuvres*, xi. 29.

But the height of sublimity was probably reached in these thrilling lines:—

Virgile, Horace ont écrit en Latin,
Les Grecs en grec, et nous dans notre langue. . . .

Épître à Fouqué, 1750, *Œuvres*, xi. 16.

In contrast with the poems, the historical works of this period have no little real merit. The earliest His historical works. in point of time was the sketch of the two Silesian wars, which was completed in 1746. During the progress of this work, the plan seems to have occurred to Frederic of incorporating it, as parts two and three, in a general history of the house of Brandenburg, beginning with the earliest times. But this was afterwards abandoned for the form which appears in his collected writings. The Silesian wars are described in the "*Histoire de mon temps*," published from the revised manuscript of 1775, and only after the author's death. The other work, which was in a sense introductory to this, bears the title "*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Brandebourg*." It was first published in 1748, after having been read in instalments before the academy; other editions rapidly followed.¹

These two works, though not of equal value, have many Their honesty. characteristics in common. Both are written in a simple, unaffected style, have a tone of candor, which often indeed borders on cynicism, and usually reveal an honest desire to tell the truth. His rule in this respect is announced by the author himself. "I have raised myself," he says, "above all prejudices, and have treated princes, kings, relations, as ordinary beings. Far from being seduced by my position, far from making idols of my ancestors, I have blamed vice in them with freedom, for vice ought not to find an asylum on the throne. I have praised virtue wherever I have found it, and yet guarded myself against the enthusiasm which it

¹ The *Mémoires de Brandebourg* now form vol. i., the "*Histoire de mon temps*," vols. ii. and iii., of the *Œuvres de Frédéric*. The earlier version of the last named work has lately been rescued from oblivion, and published in vol. iv. of the *Publikationen aus den k. preussischen Staatsarchiven*, Leipsic, 1879. It is also made the subject of a critical study by Ranke, *Sämmt. Werke*, xxiv. 117 et seq.

inspires, in order that the pure and simple truth may alone reign in this history.”¹ This much Frederic had a right to say. But when he had found what he believed to be the truth, it was hard to convince him of an error. An instance of his obstinacy is his treatment of Walpole’s famous excise scheme. He had discovered in the course of his readings in Prussian history that one of the measures by which the Great Elector made himself an absolute ruler was the introduction of a permanent excise, removed from all parliamentary control; and he at once leaped to the conclusion that such a tax must be always and everywhere the friend of despotism. From that false standpoint he gravely discusses Walpole’s project. At the time of the war of the succession in Poland, he says, “George the Second formed a plan to make himself entirely sovereign in Great Britain, a plan which could be executed only by indirect and insidious measures. To introduce the excise was to enchain the nation; and if the scheme had succeeded, it would have given the king a fixed and permanent revenue, by the aid of which he could have increased the army, and founded his power on a solid basis.”² The error of this view was pointed out to Frederic by men whose authority was above dispute. Sir J. Yorke and sir Andrew Mitchell both urged him, for the sake of his own reputation, to correct the mistake in subsequent editions; but he insisted on the accuracy of his account of the transaction, and thus it stands to the present day.³

Such errors of generalization are least frequent in the history of the Silesian wars. In that, the author was dealing only with recent transactions which he had himself witnessed, in which he had been a leading

*Histoire de
mon temps.*

¹ Épître dédicatoire au prince de Prusse, *Œuvres de Frédéric*, i. p. xliv.

² *Œuvres de Frédéric*, i. 165.

³ Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 2.

actor, and which he described from personal knowledge. He took Cæsar for a model; and his own experiences gave animation to a narrative which, as it was not to be published until after his death, treated persons and events with the most perfect freedom. There are errors indeed both of fact and of interpretation. But they are quite as often adverse as favorable to the king himself, and suggest the probability that they were due to carelessness or a treacherous memory, rather than to deliberate mendacity. The most care is required in the use of the personal portraits, which are scattered plentifully throughout the work. In these Frederic's prejudices and his love of caricature find such malicious expression, that the features of many prominent men as drawn by him need to be corrected by the aid of more authentic sources.

The other work is a running critical sketch of the history of Brandenburg-Prussia down to the death of Frederic William I. It is largely biographical in treatment, and seems indeed not to have been written in consecutive order, but in a series of monographs upon the various reigns. These were afterwards knit together into a connected whole. Much space is accordingly given to a characterization of the different reigns, who with one exception, the historian's own father, are treated without reserve and without charity. The censure which he so freely distributes has some error and some exaggeration, but in general the judgments passed by Frederic are such as the world would not hesitate to ratify. The political views expressed in the work show considerable practical insight, and now and then flashes of acute and penetrating wisdom. But no system or body of doctrine is erected; no clear code of criticism formulated; no broad, comprehensive, and enlightened view of government and society revealed. And even such new material as the work brought to light the world owes, not to Frederic's own researches, but to the help which he was able to

Mémoires de
Brandebourg.

command from subordinate officials of the state. The workshop of the royal historian has lately been thrown open to the public inspection.¹ A view of that busy establishment shows that large portions of the memoirs, and especially the digressions upon government, religion, diplomacy, and the like, were based upon the most careful study of the official sources, but that such studies were conducted by the men employed in the archives, who reported the results in convenient form for the king's use. Little then remained for him except to weave these reports into his text. This part of the work, the literary or editorial part, was, however, skilfully performed, and is perhaps the chief merit of the book. The memoirs are concise, clear, and readable. As a rapid summary of the course of growth, and the lines of policy which built up the kingdom of Prussia, they deserve to rank among the best manuals of the kind in any language.²

Yet the credit even for this must be shared by Frederic with the friends and advisers whom he kept about him. Maupertuis and Voltaire were both consulted about the literary form of the historical works. One of their duties, indeed, was to render services of this kind; and the circle of collaborators may thus be widened out until the royal author himself is only indistinctly visible at the centre.

Frederic's
literary
assistants.

The president of the academy still enjoyed the favor of his powerful patron. On his return to Berlin in 1744, he was entered on the civil list for a liberal salary, and received a comfortable house for his official residence. His suit for the hand of a fair daughter of the

Maupertuis.

¹ In a study entitled "Zur literarischen Thatigkeit Friedrichs des Grossen," by Max Posner, in the volume, *Miscellaneen zur Geschichte König Friedrichs des Grossen*, Berlin, 1878, which contains a great deal of curious and minute information.

² I am glad to be able to cite in support of this opinion so good a critic as Sainte-Beuve. See his two essays on Frederic in the *Cause-ries de Lundi*, Paris, 1852, vol. iii.

Prussian aristocracy was warmly supported by the king and the queen dowager, who saw in such a union one more tie to bind him to his adopted home. This marriage again, which took place soon after his arrival, gave him widespread social connections, not without their value even for a philosopher. He was thus favored by fortune in many ways. A lover happily married, a favorite at court, a scholar with means and leisure, he began his new career under auspices which seemed equally promising for his own fame and for the cause of science.

Yet a great variety of petty vexations still tried the serenity of his soul. He complained of the absence of a social environment favorable to science, and even of the crudeness of the material which he found in the academy itself.¹ His nationality made him odious to his German rivals; the disciples of Leibnitz opposed the intrusion of new methods and a new philosophy; and the superficial peers, who still formed a large element in the institution, contested the authority of a president with so little purity in his blood, and so few quarterings on his shield. The interposition of Frederic checked indeed all open insubordination, and fixed beyond appeal the status of the imported scholar.² The power of the president was made nearly absolute. The division of labor between the four classes or sections — physics, mathematics, philology, and philosophy — was more clearly defined, and each class was restricted to its own field of work. Frederic himself took the merely nominal title of protector, leaving Maupertuis to control the actual direction, to eliminate useless members, to introduce better material, and to dispense the revenues of the institution, as well as to pursue, in his intervals of leisure, his re-

¹ Maupertuis to Frederic, 15 January, 1746.

² Cabinet order, 10 May, 1746. Cf. La Beaumelle, *Vie de Maupertuis*, pp. 298, 299, who has the letters exchanged at the time with the king.

searches into the system of nature, and the possibilities of a universal language.¹ In a few years the learned body was ushered into new and more comfortable quarters. The building in which it had previously met was destroyed by fire, with all the collections which it contained, in 1742. But ten years later another, more sumptuous edifice arose in its place, and here the academy at last felt itself at home. It shared the hospitality of the building with the academy of arts and a troop of cavalry. The wits of Berlin dedicated it: *musis et mulis*.²

It appears therefore that Frederic really desired to make the academy a success, and its president happy.

But there remained other trials, which not even the order of an absolute prince could wholly prevent. Absurd projects, which on account of the station of their authors it was often difficult to suppress, were thrust upon the academy. Profane critics openly attacked, within the sacred precincts of the society itself, the doctrine of the economy of forces in nature. One class of enemies pronounced the president a dangerous teacher of scientific errors. Another treated him as a pretentious sciolist, offering a fair mark for the shafts of ridicule. His boundless vanity, his exquisite irritability, and a certain offensive arrogance in his hypotheses, thus led him into one controversy after another, until the arrival of Voltaire gave a subtle and unscrupulous leader to the opposition, and compelled a final struggle for supremacy.

To Voltaire, as to Maupertuis, the Prussian capital offered a refuge from ingratitude, hostility, and persecution. In the interval after his second visit to Berlin, in 1744, the academy had indeed opened its doors to the first author of France, though with a reluctance which throws a curious light upon the state of French society. Madame de Pompadour had known Voltaire be-

Unpopularity of Maupertuis.

Voltaire.

¹ La Beaumelle, p. 185 et seq.

² Preuss, i. 262, 263.

fore the favor of Louis lifted her into prosperity, and she was still his friend. At her suggestion the poet wrote a graceful play to be rendered during the festivities in connection with the first marriage of the dauphin. This paltry farce, as the author calls it, procured him a position as gentleman of the bed-chamber, the title of historiographer of France, and the support of the court for his candidacy.¹ Even this humiliation did not suffice. The church still demanded reparation, and Voltaire was base enough to write a letter in which he repelled the charge of irreligion, professed his belief in Christianity, and even his warm attachment to the order of the Jesuits. This was undoubtedly a heavy price to pay for a concession which could confer no honor on Voltaire. But a fauteuil in the academy was a seductive prize; the poet was vain; and as the members of the learned societies were under the special protection of the laws, he now counted on a certain immunity from the malice of his enemies.

In this hope he was disappointed. The clique of poetasters who rallied about the name of Crébillon, and the priests whom Voltaire's election to the academy had only silenced for a moment, soon began to attack him more malevolently than before. The Pompadour's support became less active. The king treated him coldly. To these causes of chagrin was added a sincere grief at the death of madame du Châtelet, which occurred at Sceaux while the pair were visiting the duchess of Maine. Voltaire made one more attempt to face his adversaries; and by three tragedies, rapidly written on subjects which Crébillon had already treated, contemptuously

Settles in
Berlin.

¹ Condorcet in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, lxiv. 56; *Mémoires du duc de Richelieu*, v. 393, 394. Voltaire's caustic account of the incident was:—

Mon *Henri Quatre* et ma *Zaïre*,
Et mon *Américaine Alzire*,
Ne m'ont valu jamais un seul regard du roi;
J'eus beaucoup d'ennemis avec très peu de gloire;
Les honneurs et les biens pleuvent enfin sur moi,
Pour une farce de la foire.

challenged a comparison.¹ Men of taste knew where the superiority lay. But men of taste were not the sole arbiters of literary fortune at the time, and Voltaire had only the consciousness of victory without its rewards. He then began to look toward Berlin. Frederic had never ceased to press him with invitations; and though Voltaire well understood the character of his royal friend, and the service which he would expect from such a guest, he perceived also the attractions of a city where his talent would be blindly worshipped, and where he could attack bigotry and charlatanism with perfect freedom.² He decided therefore to accept. After some coquettish resistance, and some haggling over terms,³ he finally made up his mind to the journey, took leave of the French court, and in July, 1750, reached Berlin.⁴

Here a royal welcome awaited him. He was taken under the king's own roof, and provided with every convenience for his literary labors. The promise of Frederic in regard to the terms of his engagement was strictly kept. The cross of the order of merit hung from his collar. The gold key of a chamberlain of the household proclaimed his rank at court. An allowance of twenty thousand francs, while supplying his daily wants, made it possible, by thrifty management, to accumulate a modest surplus for the future.

At first he was thoroughly happy. His letters to Paris are fairly enthusiastic over the independence of his posi-

¹ The three were *Sémiramis*, *Oreste*, and *Rome Sauvée*, aimed respectively at the *Sémiramis*, the *Electre*, and the *Catalina* of Crébillon.

² See Frederic to Voltaire, 24 May, 1750. "Vous y serez reçu comme le Virgile de ce siècle," etc.

³ See Voltaire to Frederic, 8 May, 1750.

⁴ D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, iii. 348, 349, describes Voltaire as dismissed almost contemptuously by the court, after vainly trying to get some diplomatic mission to Frederic. Louis said to the court that "c'était un fou de plus à la cour de Berlin et un fou de moins à la sienne."

tion ; the honors of which he was the object ; the generosity of his host ; the charms of the princess Amelia ; Charms of his position. the opera ; the private theatricals, where great ladies and gentlemen took his own characters ; the evening suppers, where the wit played without restraint among the most sacred and solemn subjects.¹ In return for these advantages he was only required to spend an hour or two a day in revising and correcting the literary productions of his host. This left him plenty of leisure for his own occupations, and several important works were completed during the period of this residence at Berlin.² Yet Voltaire was reluctant to cut himself entirely loose from Paris and France. While he was writing to his niece about the felicity of his life at Berlin, and urging her to share it with him, he secretly intrigued with other correspondents for an arrangement by which he might return to France, and again bask in the sunshine of madame de Pompadour's favor.³

This apparent duplicity was dictated of course, first of all, by a prudent instinct of self-preservation. Secondary motives may have had their force, for Voltaire was a man of mixed and complicated impulses. But he well understood that the character and the composition of the literary circle of Berlin made his own tenure precarious, and required him to keep open a route by which he could retreat to France whenever the necessity should arise.

This circle contained a few men like Voltaire himself Frederic's circle. and Maupertuis, who held the foremost rank in their chosen fields of work ; and others who, without a European reputation, were endeared to Frederic

¹ See his private correspondence especially for the year 1750. *Œuvres*, vol. xlviii.

² Condorcet in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, lxiv. 65. The most important of these was the "Siècle de Louis XIV."

³ See his curious letter to the duke of Richelieu, August, 1750, and the duke's *Mémoires*, vol. v. pp. 394, 395.

by the wit of their conversation, by their charms of manner or felicity of temper. It had also many adventurers, who, exiled from France on account of their opinions, had found their way, usually through Holland, to the court of an agnostic king. But the composition of the society was at no time fixed. Other duties and occupations, the forfeiture of the master's favor, quarrels with him or with other members, and all the petty vexations of such a life, led now one person, now another to drop out of the chosen circle, while new favorites were called in to fill the vacant seats.

The place of reader and amanuensis to the king was filled at this time by Darget, the former secretary of Valori. He entered Frederic's service soon after the peace of Dresden, and for half a dozen years was the close companion of his literary labors. A faithful, straightforward person, with a rare sweetness and simplicity of disposition, an alert intelligence, a sound judgment, and excellent taste, he performed the delicate services required of him with such tact and felicity that his return to Paris was felt as a genuine loss.

The marquis d'Argens, a more eminent man, and a closer friend, appeared at Berlin in 1742. He had served his native country first in the diplomatic service and then in the army; but compelled by injuries to give up his commission, he had taken to letters as a means of support. The sceptical tone of his writings attracted the notice of Voltaire, who recommended him to Frederic, then crown prince. This procured him an invitation to visit Rheinsberg. But D'Argens, being a man of large stature, feared to venture within the jurisdiction of a king whose ruling passion was for tall recruits;¹ and he drifted about from court to court until 1742, when, on the favorable report of Jordan, he was finally adopted into

¹ Schlosser, i. 564.

Frederic's literary family.¹ The writings of D'Argens are unknown to the present age. He attempted the epistolary style, which Montesquieu had made so effective in the *Lettres Persanes*, and assailed revealed religion in pamphlets which strictly followed the fashion of the hour. He was coarse, clumsy, vulgar, fond of his cup, and a favorite object of the king's unfeeling practical jokes. Yet, with all his scepticism, dissoluteness, and levity, he had a certain integrity of character, and a strength of attachment, for which Frederic had the greatest respect. The correspondence with D'Argens extends over many years, and is in the best style of literary friendship.

Algarotti was a more wayward spirit. In Frederic's letters he is the swan of Padua, and yet the
 Algarotti. most inconstant of all swans.² He persisted in leaving Berlin soon after the accession of the young monarch, travelled through Europe, received or assumed various diplomatic charges, and in 1742 settled in Dresden. Active negotiations for his return to Prussia led to no result until 1747, when he again attached himself to Frederic. The next year another rupture occurred. Algarotti took a violent passion to the danseuse Barberina, and, either because he was crossed in his desire by the king, or for some other reason, demanded his dismissal, which was at once granted in severely uncomplimentary terms.³ But the difficulty seems to have been adjusted. The count, who owed his title to Frederic, remained several years at Berlin, and continued, after his final departure, in active correspondence with his patron. He died in 1764. By Frederic's orders a monument was erected to his memory in the Campo Santo at Pisa, and on this a

¹ Note by the editor in *Œuvres de Frédéric*, vol. xix., introductory to the correspondence with D'Argens. Frederic to D'Argens, 19 March, 1742.

² Vide *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xviii. 30.

³ Frederic to Maupertuis, 24 March, 1748.

Latin inscription, likewise suggested by Frederic, describes him as a rival of Ovid and a disciple of Newton.¹

A less attractive character than either D'Argens or Algarotti was La Mettrie, an exile both from France and from Holland. He was by profes-^{La Mettrie.}sion a surgeon, and in that capacity had served in the French army. After the battle of Fontenoy he fixed himself at Leyden, but was expelled from the city on account of a work which was too licentious even for the liberal standard of Holland.² Compared with him, even Voltaire was a conservative. Voltaire attacked the priests of religion; La Mettrie attacked religion itself, and in a grossly offensive style. Yet even this outspoken atheist found shelter, protection, and pecuniary support at Berlin. Installed in some literary position which enabled him to live upon the privy purse, his chief occupation was to test the extreme limits of Frederic's capacity to hear flippant epigrams against beliefs, which were sacred to nearly the whole population of Prussia. At the same time La Mettrie was a frequent and welcome guest at the house of lord Tyrconnel, the Jacobite envoy of Louis the Fifteenth.³

The earl-marshal, Keith, began his relations with Frederic as a member of the round table, which he<sup>Other favor-
ites.</sup> joined in 1747, after his expulsion from Russia. Though a man of firm convictions, for which he suffered a long exile from his country, he was neither a bigot nor a fanatic, but a man of mild, benevolent disposition, easy

¹ Frederic to the chevalier Lorenzo Guazzesi, 12 June, 1764. The inscription reads: "Algarotto Ovidii Æmulo Newtoni Discipulo Fridericus magnus." The form of words was chosen by Algarotti's friends.

² *L'homme machine*, 1748.

³ For a descriptive list, or "catalogue raisonné," of the men of letters at Berlin during this reign, vide the abbé Denina's *La Prusse littéraire sous Frédéric II.*, 3 vols., Berlin, 1790, 1791. The introduction has a good summary of the progress of the learned sciences in Prussia.

in his manners, firm in his friendships, and a favorite with all. His brother, marshal Keith, was also a frequent guest at the royal suppers. The circle of intimates also included two other soldiers, Rothenburg and Winterfeld, men widely different in character. Rothenburg, though a good soldier, was something more than a soldier; and he has already been seen on a diplomatic mission to Paris, for which his knowledge of the world, his familiarity with the gayer forms of social dissipation, his French connections, and his nominal attachment to the Roman Catholic religion, gave him special fitness. But Winterfeld was a sturdy German of the purest Pomeranian type. An earnest, intense, aggressive man, with a fierce thirst for action, and a passionate fervor in his sense of duty, which would have given him a high place in the esteem of Cromwell, he found little pleasure in the daring irreverence that characterized Frederic's circle, and even in the literary atmosphere that enveloped it.

Literature and philosophy did not, however, hold exclusive sway. Art was also represented. In
Architect-
ture. Knobelsdorf Frederic had an architect of great purity of taste, and considerable independence of character, who, during his term of favor, exercised a distinct influence on the style of public buildings. The years of his early manhood were passed as an officer in the army. But his natural fondness for architecture was encouraged by a study of the monuments of Schlüter's genius, and he obtained leave to travel in foreign countries for observation and study. On his return he was appointed chief architect of the kingdom. His earliest important work was the royal opera-house. He next took up the palace at Charlottenburg, to which, as built by Schlüter, he made additions in harmony with the original design, and yet with marked characteristics of his own. He directed the enlargement and decoration of the old castle at Potsdam. The Thiergarten, the great park

near Berlin, was laid out by him. At this time Frederic formed a comprehensive plan for beautifying the capital by a series of ambitious structures, many of which were planned, and in part executed, by Knobelsdorf. Such were the academy; the home for invalid soldiers; the palace of prince Henry, which afterwards became the university; the Protestant cathedral, whose simple yet noble proportions are still admired. Such, too, was the Catholic church of St. Hedwig, for which Frederic granted a concession, and the progress of which he warmly encouraged.¹

In 1752 Frederic ordered plans for a small and dainty pleasure-house in the outskirts of Potsdam, and for an extensive system of parks and gardens about it. Knobelsdorf at once drew up sketches and estimates. But the severity of his taste did not wholly meet in this case the approbation of the king, who preferred another style; and his plans were accepted only in part. From this time Knobelsdorf's credit began to wane. Baumann, a rival architect, was commissioned to build the palace, and thus Sans Souci arose. It was opened with brilliant social festivities in 1747.

In this delightful retreat Frederic passed the greater part of his time for the rest of his life. It was only twenty miles from Berlin, the capital, ^{Sans Souci.} which could thus easily be reached when his presence was required; and yet it was sufficiently remote to give him relief from the noise, the excitement, and the distractions of a great city. If he wished for solitude, a wide stretch of forest, and a series of pretty lakes shut him off from the world. If he desired gayety, he touched a bell, and men of wit and fashion thronged the halls of Sans Souci. Every year rendered the place more attractive. A collec-

¹ Nicolai, *Beschreibung der königlichen Residenzstädte Berlin und Potsdam*, 3d ed., Berlin, 1786, vol. iii. p. 1212; Preuss, i. 268, 269; *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, sub art. "Knobelsdorf."

tion of pictures and statues was slowly formed. The park, under the charge of skilful landscape gardeners, grew in beauty. A larger and more commodious palace, the so-called New Castle, was planned in 1754, and completed in the following years. In short, no trouble or expense was spared to make Potsdam a fitting home for a philosophical king who despised the usual pomp and parade of royalty, and found the greatest enjoyment in a sylvan retreat, where the muses could be cultivated in freedom, and philosophy reign supreme. On great occasions of state Frederic still repaired to Berlin. He frequently passed a few days, mainly for the sake of change, at Rheinsberg, or Charlottenburg, or some other of his modest country seats. But his home was Sans Souci.¹

It was here that his literary friends gathered about him, and that were held those reunions which Noctes ambrosianæ. fill so large a place in the history of the reign. The guests met either at evening entertainments, or at suppers, or both. Of the former class, the favorite form was that of chamber concerts, at which Frederic himself often contributed obligatos on the flute. The importation from Dresden of Quantz, a master of that instrument, had enabled the king to improve his own execution until he played not only with exquisite delicacy and refinement, but also with a warmth of feeling which was in singular contrast to his sharp and cynical disposition. Occasionally a play was rendered, or an excursion was made to Berlin to see Barberina in ballet. But the suppers afforded a more select, and therefore to that extent a higher, kind of enjoyment. Rank and etiquette were abolished. The host and not the king presided. The greatest freedom of speech was invited; and it was Frederic's apparent intention to organize a circle in which a perfect spirit of literary and philosophical independence should rule.

¹ Venez à Sans Souci, c'est-là que l'on peut être
Son souverain, son roi, son véritable maître.

Épître à D'Argens, *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xi. 420.

But the older and more experienced courtiers knew that the license granted by a prince ought always to be used with caution. Those who did ^{Warfare of wits} not observe this prudence often learned, by cruel experience, that the round table of Sans Souci resembled the amphitheatre of the Roman emperors. It was a field for the display of gladiatorial skill, where each guest had to defend himself against his fellows. But the king also descended into the arena, and when he pierced some unsuspecting victim with his keen and cruel sarcasm, the wound had to be nursed in silence. For the weapons of Cæsar could not be turned against himself.

In this sort of warfare Voltaire, when the king abstained, was easily the first, for it was the sort in which nature had armed him to succeed. A different kind of contest might have found his armor weak, his weapons poor, his tactics deficient in vigor and ^{Strength and weakness of Voltaire.} in skill. His meagre frame, his sharp, thin, fox-like face, his greed for money, his vanity, were so many provocations to attack, and so many obstacles to successful defence. But when the battle was one of wit, Voltaire had a weapon before which the boldest man in the company quailed. Armed with that, he could safely defy all enemies in the open field. At the same time the very power of his wit, and the freedom with which he used it, made secret enemies, pledged to ruin him by intrigue and calumny, out of all who felt the cruel edge of his sword.

Such enemies were quick to take advantage of any error into which his avarice, or his egotism, or his ambition might betray him. An error of this kind was the famous quarrel and lawsuit with the pawnbroker Hirsch. This personage had been employed by Voltaire to go to Dresden and buy up bills on the Saxon exchequer, ^{Voltaire vs. Hirsch.} which, though greatly depreciated in the country of their issue, the treaty of peace in 1745 had made pay-

able in coin to all Prussian holders.¹ In equity, of course, only the bills thus held at the time the treaty was signed were covered by its provisions. But this was not expressly stated, and a thriving traffic across the frontier at once sprang up; until Frederic came to the relief of the Saxon treasury with edicts making it illegal for his subjects to buy up the depreciated bills with a view to presenting them for payment under the treaty. All this was known to Voltaire, who tried therefore to conceal the real nature of his transaction. He gave Hirsch a draft on Paris, and received as security a deposit of diamonds, which were to be returned when the exchequer bills should be delivered. But as the Jew was unaccountably slow in starting, and otherwise acted in a suspicious manner, Voltaire sent orders to his Paris banker not to cash the draft. It was returned to Hirsch protested. He then, of course, demanded his jewels back, for which, with a fair compensation for his trouble, he offered to surrender the draft and all other papers in his hands. Voltaire consented. But when Hirsch examined the diamonds he insisted that they had been changed, and refused to accept them as his own. The parties then went to law. Voltaire denied entirely all that part of Hirsch's testimony which connected the transaction with an illegal scheme of speculation in Saxon exchequer bills; and he pretended that it concerned only the loan of jewels for use in private theatricals, and the purchase of furs with which he had commissioned the pawnbroker. He implored Maupertuis to use his influence with Jarriges, then one of the judges, to get a favorable decision, and was refused.² Cocceji, who also sat in the case, was importuned and nearly insulted by the poet.³ The papers submitted in evidence by Hirsch clearly exposed the nature of the business. But

¹ *Supra*, p. 52.

² *La Beaumelle*, p. 142.

³ Frederic to Wilhelmina, 22 January, 1751.

the court passed over this point as not formally before it, fined Hirsch for the technical offence of denying his signature, and ordered a mutual restitution of all receipts and valuables. It was generally believed, however, that Voltaire had made changes in at least one of the papers after Hirsch signed it, so that he suffered an undoubted moral defeat.¹

The affair was a serious blow to his prestige. A pamphlet soon appeared in which he was held up to contempt for engaging in an unlawful transaction with a Jew, and then trying to swindle his partner by falsifying the records, and substituting coarse diamonds for fine ones.² To Frederic, the scandal was extremely painful. It exposed his whole company of Frenchmen to public ridicule; and he sent Voltaire an unusually caustic though manly and dignified letter of rebuke, which throws considerable light upon the relations and the state of feeling between the two.

In this letter Voltaire is reminded that he had come to Potsdam in search of the rest and quiet so grateful to a man of his years, worn out by quarrels with rival authors. Yet he had begun at once to make the most singular demands. He disliked Fréron, the literary agent of the king at the French capital, and to please him Fréron's name had been stricken from the list of correspondents. He had insisted on the dismissal of D'Arnaud for the same reason; and this request had been granted. He had officiously meddled in diplomacy, which was no con-

Discredit of
Voltaire.

Frederic to
Voltaire.

¹ The most complete history of this "cause célèbre" is given by Ferdinand Klein in the *Annalen der Gesetzgebung, in den preuss. Staaten*, vol. v. 1790. Desnoiresterres, *Voltaire et Frédéric*, 2d ed., Paris, 1871, pp. 124 et seq., sums up the evidence on both sides. Cf. Voltaire to Darget, 18 January, 1757.

² *Tantale en procès*, anon. Preuss, *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xiv. p. x., names it among the works erroneously ascribed to Frederic, and says the author was one Pottier, court poet of the margrave Charles of Schwedt, a general officer in the Prussian army.

cern of his. And now he had become involved in a disgraceful affair with a Hebrew pawnbroker, which was making a scandal all over the town, and had brought out remonstrances from the Saxon government. Such things could no longer be endured. He would be welcome for the future at Sans Souci only in case he learned to control his passions, and live like a philosopher.¹

Voltaire's aversion to D'Arnaud had its origin in a fit of jealousy, which Frederic himself had excited. It was while Voltaire at Paris was still apparently hesitating over the invitation to Berlin. D'Arnaud, an ardent and not over-wise literary neophyte whom Voltaire already knew, had accepted a similar invitation, and was about to depart. In a moment of rapture over this new acquisition the king burst into song; and in his song D'Arnaud was saluted as the rising sun, about to take the place of the great luminary which was rapidly sinking to rest.² It so happened, of course, that these verses fell into the hands of Voltaire, and aroused in him the instant determination to show that his genius, instead of declining, was yet in the full meridian of its splendor.³ But the incident also made him a mortal enemy of the unfortunate D'Arnaud, whom he began to attack soon after his arrival in Berlin. These attacks finally culminated in a distinct charge that D'Arnaud had bribed his, Voltaire's, secretary to give him a copy of *La Pucelle*, which was known to exist in manuscript, for prince Henry; and Frederic ended the

¹ Frederic to Voltaire, 24 February, 1751.

² Déjà l'Apollon de la France
S'achemine à sa décadence;
Venez briller à votre tour;
Élevez-vous s'il brille encore.
Ainsi le couchant d'un beau jour
Promet une plus belle aurore

Vers à D'Arnaud, *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xiv. 95.

³ See, *Œuvres de Frédéric*, vol. xxii., Voltaire to Frederic, 26 June, 1750, and the editor's note.

scandal by sending the offender, who he admitted had done him no harm, away from Potsdam.¹

Fréron and D'Arnaud, though included in the list of Voltaire's enemies, were thus shut off from direct connection with the seat of war. But others more fortunate still remained at Berlin, and abused the confidence alike of the king and of the poet. La Mettrie seems to have been one of these. Voltaire had always de-^{Malice of La Mettrie.}spised this lusty adventurer, though no actual rupture had occurred between them, and outwardly their relations were friendly. One day La Mettrie visited Voltaire at his rooms, and, either from want of tact or in a spirit of mischief, reported that the king in speaking of him, Voltaire, had compared him to an orange, which he would squeeze dry in another year, and then throw the skin away. This was worse than to be called the setting sun, and caused its victim the keenest anxiety. In many letters at this time, Voltaire racks his brain over the arguments for and against the credibility of the story, and finally, though no change was perceived in Frederic's treatment of him, reaches the unwilling conclusion that it must be true.² About this time La Mettrie, who added gluttony to his other vices, ate a pheasant pie at lord Tyrconnel's, and died the next day. A report was circulated that he had taken the sacrament, like a good Catholic, just before his death; and there was no little consternation at Sans Souci until inquiry showed the report to be false. But somebody used the incident — Voltaire says it was Maupertuis — in an even more malicious manner. It was stated to Frederic that Voltaire, on hearing of La Mettrie's death, made the remark that the post of atheist to his majesty was vacant, a charge which he himself pronounces a ca-

¹ Besides Frederic to Voltaire, 24 February, 1751, above cited, see Voltaire to Frederic, November, 1750, January and February, 1751, in *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xxii. 257-261.

² Voltaire to madame Denis, 2 September, 24 December, 1751.

umny, though it cannot be said to calumniate his reputation for wit. In any event, Frederic actually wrote a eulogy of the departed atheist, which was read in the academy.¹

I pass over a number of personal amenities like this, of which the books of scandal are full. Spies, tale-bearers, back-biters, and mischief-makers flitted between Frederic and Voltaire, repeating, distorting, or inventing remarks of one and the other, until the poison could no longer be resisted. The suppers, Voltaire says, began to be less gay. The king gave him fewer verses to correct, an omission which could probably have been borne with composure if it had not been ominous of an impending rupture. It was necessary for him to be ready for a catastrophe by making provision for the future.²

The crisis was hastened by a public outbreak of the jealousy between Voltaire and Maupertuis. In Voltaire and Maupertuis. a circle of wits like that at Potsdam, where nothing was too sacred for ridicule, the frailties of the learned president of the academy, and the strange folly of many of his projects, could not hope to pass unobserved. His merits and his services entitled him, indeed, to better treatment. Though it may gratify a supposed modern desire for humor in history to call him in quotation marks the "flattener of the earth," the man who had made a trying, perilous journey in order, by astronomical observations, to establish the shape of the globe on which we live, and whose conclusions were embodied in the school geographies of the children, had a right to expect at least forbearance from the flippant circle at Potsdam. But while he may have been treated with a certain mock deference at suppers which he attended, when absent he was a favorite object for the wit and satire of irreverent members. In this Frederic himself often took part, though with some

¹ In vol. vii. of the *Œuvres de Frédéric*.

² *Œuvres de Voltaire*, lxiv. 225.

scruples about the propriety of satirizing the head of his own academy. But Voltaire had no such restraints. The fun which he aimed at the pompous savant had an edge sharpened by malice, and was intended to wound. The protests and warnings which Frederic interposed from time to time were in such tones of mild deprecation, of half-concealed approval, that Voltaire felt encouraged to believe that his most wicked epigrams would pass unpunished so long as he made them bright, racy, and agreeable to hear.

While Maupertuis was daily suffering under this exquisite mockery, his scientific authority was the object of a more sober attack. Among the ^{Professor} ^{Koenig.} members of the academy was a certain professor Koenig, a resident of Holland. Koenig put little faith in Maupertuis' theory of the minimum of force as an explanation of the phenomenon of motion in nature, and, coming to Berlin, presented some papers which set forth his scepticism. A controversy ensued, in which Koenig was treated with impatient and probably supercilious rudeness. Offended by this, he went to Leipsic; published his essay there; and to his own speculations added an extract from a pretended letter of Leibnitz, alluding to and rejecting the very hypothesis which Maupertuis had proclaimed as a truth discovered by himself. The article made a great sensation, and all eyes were turned toward the president for his reply. He acted with no little adroitness. Ignoring Koenig's own arguments, he called for the production of Leibnitz's letter, which he said his adversary was bound to submit as a preliminary step to further discussion. But Koenig replied that he possessed only a copy from the original, which he intimated was among the papers of his friend Hienzi, a Swiss radical, executed at Berne long before for treason. Inquiry was made at Berne, and no such letter was found. Satisfied with this technical victory, Maupertuis proceeded to take vengeance upon his rival. He brought the case before the academy,

which solemnly deliberated upon it for months, and finally passed a resolution equivalent to a decree of expulsion against Koenig for the crime of forgery. The victim gave up his diploma of membership, and returning to Leyden flooded Europe with pamphlets against his victorious enemy. In one of these he gave the whole of Leibnitz's letter, which was in fact genuine.¹

Voltaire plunged into this scandal with all the eagerness of his nature. He was an old acquaintance of Koenig, who had once come to Cirey, on the introduction of no other than Maupertuis himself, to teach the philosophy of Leibnitz to madame du Châtelet; and he now rushed forward to defend a man whom he regarded as a martyr to freedom of speech, sacrificed on the altar of Maupertuis' jealousy and intolerance. To him the biographer of Maupertuis ascribes several caustic brochures which appeared in defence of Koenig, and in ridicule of Koenig's persecutor.² Some of them were undoubtedly from his pen.

Frederic watched the progress of the battle with mixed feelings of delight and dismay. His own principles of toleration made it difficult for him to approve the harsh treatment which Koenig had received; and yet to disavow Maupertuis, and leave him to his enemies, would gravely impair the credit of the academy. At length he interfered. In an anonymous pamphlet, which was at once, and probably according to his intention, recognized as his, he curtly dismissed Koenig as guilty, although he evidently had not read a line of his defence; vindicated the academy against the charge of servility and injustice; and in violent language assailed the author of the libels upon Maupertuis.³ Such a castigation was not

¹ In his *Appel au public du jugement de l'académie de Berlin*, etc., Leyden, 1752.

² La Beaumelle, *Vie de Maupertuis*, p. 170.

³ "Lettre d'un académicien de Berlin à un académicien de Paris," October, 1752, *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xv. 59 et seq. It attacked es-

at all agreeable to Voltaire. In letters to Paris he protested with much dignity against Frederic's procedure, and questioned the right of royalty thus to interfere in a purely literary dispute. Then he combined all his resources of wit, satire, and invective in the production of the famous "Diatribes du Docteur Akakia."¹

The doctor pretends to feel aggrieved at the injustice which Maupertuis had done to the profession of medicine in some of his recent writings, more Doctor Akakia. especially in the proposition that a physician ought not to be paid if his patient died. In revenge he passes in review the many almost incredible theses which Maupertuis gravely sustained, as that the existence of God could be proved by an algebraic formulæ,² that the nature of the human soul could be learned by dissecting giants, that a hole could be bored to the centre of the earth, that in certain states of mental exaltation the future could be predicted, and the like; procures a condemnation of these fallacies from the inquisitor of the pope; and finally introduces a pretended treaty of peace between Maupertuis and Koenig, in which by a double stroke of humor Maupertuis is made to renounce all of his sublime delusions, and Koenig to accept the rules of evidence that had been used for his own condemnation. The fun of Akakia is irresistible. Everything was used which could make the president ridiculous and contemptible, — ridiculous for the vagaries of his mind, contemptible for the meanness of his soul; and the work may still be read with delight even by those unfamiliar with the circumstances in which it was written.

pecially Voltaire's "Réponse d'un académicien de Berlin à un académicien de Paris," September, 1752.

¹ In *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xli.

² It is, however, a singular error of Voltaire's editor to represent Koenig as contesting this novel discovery, and losing his seat in the academy for that reason. The text of the *Diatribes* shows what was Koenig's real offence.

The Diatribe was first put in type, and a few copies struck off by the royal printer at Potsdam. Rage of Frederic. Frederic was furious. Although the work had probably been read in manuscript and applauded by the literary guests of Sans Souci, it was intolerable that the king's presses should be used to circulate lampoons upon the president of the king's academy. Voltaire's denials of guilt were of no avail, for he was suspiciously unlucky in having his productions stolen and published without his knowledge. The edition was destroyed, and the author was informed, in an angry letter from Frederic, that, if his writings made him worthy to be commemorated in bronze, his conduct made him fit only for chains. Then he was required to sign a written promise to publish no more attacks upon rival men of letters.¹ Yet, a few days after this, an edition of *Akakia* appeared in Holland, and the work at once became the talk of all the clubs and all the salons of Europe. Exasperated by this second breach of faith, and alarmed by the rapid success of the pamphlet, Frederic now resolved to inflict a more public humiliation upon the author. This proceeding enriched the quarrel between his two celebrities with the most comical of all the incidents which make up its history. Adopting one of the devices of the inquisition itself, this free-thinking pagan actually caused the Diatribe to be burned by the common hangman, on the twenty-fourth day of December, before the doors of Voltaire's residence in Berlin.

Such a proceeding left but a single step open to Voltaire. He sent back his cross and key, and other emblems of the royal favor; renounced his office and pension; and prepared to depart. Voltaire resigns his place.

¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xxii. 301, 302. Frederic to the earl-marshal, April, 1753, to Wilhelmina, 12 April, 1753; Voltaire to Frederic, 27 November, 1752; Luynes, xii. 343, 466, 467, who prints Frederic's letters, showing that they were known in Paris at the time.

Yet impossible as it will seem after all these mutual provocations, a species of reconciliation was actually again reached. Frederic returned the discarded symbols by the hands of a personal attendant, Fredersdorf, an odd mixture of valet de chambre and minister of state, and, with some inevitable constraints on either side, pacific relations were once more established. But Voltaire had evidently no intention of remaining. His funds he had prudently invested outside the Prussian territory, where they could not be sequestered by a prince whom he no longer trusted. Now, as a reason for departure, he pleaded ill-health, which made it necessary for him to take the waters of Plombières. But Frederic was not deceived by such a frail pretext. If Voltaire wished to quit his service, he wrote, let him return the contract of his engagement, his decorations, and the copy of the royal poems which he had in his possession ; he, Frederic, was weary of the cabals of men of letters, for they were the disgrace of literature.¹

Yet, in spite of this explicit demand, Voltaire actually left Berlin, carrying with him all the articles enumerated in the king's letter. Nor did he fly <sup>And de-
parts.</sup> secretly with his treasures, although his secretary states that he once considered such a plan.² It was rather because he promised to return, and all differences seemed to be forgotten, that he was suffered to depart with his decorations and manuscripts. The two thus separated with much politeness, and even outward cordiality.

At Leipsic, Voltaire's first halting-place, he received a

¹ Frederic to Voltaire, 16 March, 1753. The poems were contained in volumes, which, under the title *Œuvres du Philosophe de Sans Souci*, were printed and privately circulated at Potsdam in 1750. They contained the Palladion, and several other indecent or indiscreet productions.

² Collini, *Mon séjour auprès de Voltaire*, of which I know only so much as is published in the *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. lxi.

challenge from Maupertuis, which he answered in a mixed strain of persiflage and defiance, unique in the history of duelling. But his pen did not rest here. Even while retreating he turned, like the Arab, to fire poisoned darts back at the learned president, and thus broke the truce which had been tacitly adopted. Frederic was enraged, and even more alarmed. The dreadful suspicion arose that Voltaire's promise to return was only a ruse to enable him to carry off the poems; that he intended to publish them; and that he would thus show the world how the king of Prussia had ridiculed the church in the style of La Mettrie, and made caricatures of half the crowned heads of Europe.

In this state of mind he acted promptly and foolishly. An order was sent through Fredersdorf to one Freytag, the Prussian resident at Frankfort-on-the-Main, to be on the watch for the fugitive, to have him seized as soon as he entered the city, and to detain him until the stolen treasures should be restored. The envoy carried out his orders with painful inflexibility. Like most of the men trained in the service of Frederic, he had too much zeal and too little tact; was stiff and peremptory in manner; never allowed himself to be hurried; and placed the interests of his master above the convenience, the feelings, or even the rights, of all other persons. Such a martinet was the last man in the world to entrust with so delicate a task as the execution of a secret warrant among the trunks of Voltaire.

The poet and Collini finally arrived, and were at once placed under arrest. Then Freytag called for the articles in question. The cross of merit and the chamberlain's key were easily obtained, for Voltaire had them with him; but the "*Œuvre de Poëshies du roi mon maître*," as Voltaire says Freytag called the precious volume, had been left behind with some cases of books at Leipsic. This was of itself suspicious, and the king's orders were ex-

With Fred-
eric's poems.

His arrest
ordered

plicit. The poet, his secretary, and his niece, who had come on to meet him, were notified to regard themselves as prisoners until the conditions of their release were fulfilled. In this irksome restraint Voltaire had to await the arrival of the books.

His rage was boundless. To be arrested like a common thief in a free city of the empire, to have his trunks searched by the officers of justice, and An impatient prisoner. to struggle helplessly against the dull, heartless, inflexible severity of such a creature as Freytag, was not a fate which Voltaire was suited to bear with equanimity. His cries of indignation were heard in every part of Europe. He wrote letters right and left; and in one to count Kaunitz he is said to have offered the disclosure of Prussian secrets of state in return for the aid of Austria.¹ He was also unwise enough to treat Freytag with a personal violence which only led to sterner measures. An attempt to escape was followed by the removal of the party from the inn, where they had been left on parole, to safer quarters; and guards were placed in their rooms, not excepting even that of madame Dénis. Private enemies trumped up claims against the prisoner, and took advantage of his helpless condition to present them for payment. Under these various indignities it is not strange that Voltaire lost his self-control. He once drew a pistol on the bailiffs, but was saved from the crime of murder by Collini and others, who flung themselves upon him. One intrusive creditor received a fierce blow in the face, and again the guards were forced violently to restrain the poet's frenzy, while Collini offered a noble consolation to the victim. "Sir," said he, "you have had the honor of a blow from the greatest man of the century."

At length the box arrived, and Freytag eagerly seized the long-delayed poems, for which a receipt was duly

¹ Schlosser, ii. 467. He had, of course, no Prussian secrets of state to reveal.

given. Then Voltaire expected his release. But the scrupulous official zeal of Freytag invented another obstacle. A new offence had been given in the attempt to escape, and the king's answer to the report of that incident must be awaited. Thus new delays occurred, and the scandal was again prolonged. It was not until another more emphatic order arrived from Berlin, and after five weeks' detention, that the travellers were suffered to resume their journey.¹

By order of his master, Fredersdorf sent Freytag a full approval of his conduct. But the outrage made such a sensation throughout Europe that Frederic wrote a qualified disavowal of the proceedings,² and not long afterwards the pair actually resumed their correspondence. The original ardor of their affection had, however, been cooled by these bitter trials. In letters to other friends Frederic denounced the poet as a fool, hypocrite, and traitor. Voltaire took a more effective revenge. Retiring first to Alsace and thence to Switzerland, he composed, under the title "*Vie privée du roi de Prusse*," being an account of his experience with Frederic, one of the most malignant and mendacious, yet one of the most deadly satires in the whole range of literature.³

¹ The authorities for this disgraceful affair are Voltaire and Colini in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. lxiv. ; the correspondence of Frederic ; Freytag's official reports, published by Varnhagen von Ense ; and Desnoiresterres, pp. 434 et seq. D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, v. 50-52, has a letter from madame Denis with many details of the affair.

² Frederic to the lord-marshal, 28 June, 1753.

³ In Voltaire's collected works it has the title *Mémoires pour servir à la vie de M. de Voltaire*, this being the alternative title to the first authentic edition, published at Amsterdam in 1784. The earlier issues were printed, as Voltaire's friends asserted, from a "stolen copy" of the MS., which the author had never intended for publication. D'Argenson writes in his *Mémoires*, under the date 8 August, 1753 : "Il paraît un libelle intitulé '*Vie privée du roi de Prusse*.' On soupçonne avec raison Voltaire de l'avoir composé."

Frederic thus lost at nearly the same time several leading members of his literary circle. Rothenburg and La Mettrie died; Darget returned to France, Algarotti to Italy; D'Arnaud was driven away by Voltaire; and Voltaire himself made his escape, after adventures which form one of the most piquant chapters in the history of scandal. The attempts, begun the year after the rupture with Voltaire, to secure D'Alembert as his successor, ended in failure. A preliminary bribe, in the form of a pension of one thousand francs, seems to have been accepted; for Darget mentions the satisfaction which it caused among the friends of the philosopher at Paris, and madame du Hausset describes the amusement of Louis XV. and the Pompadour over the munificence of the king of Prussia.¹ In 1775 D'Alembert had an interview with Frederic at Wesel. But all efforts to gain him permanently, even the offer of the presidency of the academy on Maupertuis' death, proved fruitless.² Frederic was not left desolate, however, by the loss of so many literary friends. Maupertuis remained to enjoy the doubtful honors of his now uncontested authority. The easy, pliant, amiable marquis d'Argens continued, with occasional intervals of mild insubordination, to endure Frederic's not very kingly puns, and tricks, and practical jokes. The abbé de Prades, a rather worldly churchman, proscribed by the Sorbonne for heresy, came to fill the place of Darget. With these men the French circle was kept complete. They corrected the grammar and the rhythm of the royal poems, though without imparting the literary finish of Voltaire; and Frederic's pen kept up its usual activity.

¹ Frederic to Darget, 3 August, 1754; *Mémoires de madame du Hausset*, pp. 157-160.

² Preuss, i. 237.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COURSE OF DIPLOMACY.

IF the persecution of Koenig, the lawsuit of Hirsch, the jealousy of Voltaire and Maupertuis, and the many petty quarrels of his literary friends, had been all that disturbed the philosopher of Sans Souci, he might still be described as pursuing his recreations in as complete tranquillity as the head of a state has a right to expect. For these were mere trifles compared with the grave political anxieties which hung over every hour of his existence. The decade of peace, so fruitful in internal reforms, so grateful to the tastes of a literary prince, was also a decade of active preparation for war. On the part of Frederic this preparation was long indeed purely defensive, and kept within the limit of gradual practical reforms. But the measures of his enemies had in view a scheme which, though its original end was the reconquest of Silesia, eventually widened out into a plot against the very existence of Prussia.

Since the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, like so many other great treaties, gave complete satisfaction to none of the signatory powers, the peace which it ushered in was by no means a pacification. The sword and the musket were indeed laid down. Relations of outward friendship were again resumed. But the old enmities were not allayed, and fresh resentments were aroused even by the terms of the treaty itself. In the determination of the empress-queen to recover Silesia, and punish the king of Prussia, there remained one active source of future conflicts. Scarcely less potent, though

Peace of
Aix-la-Cha-
pelle.

somewhat more general, was the colonial rivalry of France and England, which the war had rendered sharper, and the peace had left unsettled. The negotiations which centred about these unextinguished issues, and the intrigues which went hand in hand with the negotiations, make up the diplomatic history of the next eight years.

The ill success of her arms, and the loss of much valuable territory taught a practical lesson which Maria Theresa was far too wise to neglect. She saw the necessity for great reforms, both civil and military, in the working system of the Austrian state; and in making them she thought it no crime to learn from a victorious enemy. Nor was she averse to a radical change in the foreign policy which for a century had been followed by the house of Hapsburg.

The domestic reforms left almost no department of state untouched. Justice, finance, police, in fact all branches of civil administration, went through a Reforms in Austria. severe process of reconstruction, which had in view greater efficiency with less cost, and a consolidation of the state's resources for a future day of trial. In the progress of this work, local rights and class pretensions suffered alike; old servants of the crown fell, while new men came to the front; and the social fabric was violently shaken. The repartition of the pecuniary burdens on a plan carefully formed aroused opposition in Hungary, which was only allayed by a personal visit of the empress-queen to Presburg, and long negotiations ending in a compromise. The military reforms had to meet the same obstacles, and were conducted with the same determination. Incompetent officers were weeded out. An improved system of tactics was introduced. Careful and systematic plans were devised to broaden the education of the officers, to increase the comfort of the men, and above all to improve the morale of the service, which in the past had been too much neglected. The peace establishment was fixed at one

hundred and eight thousand men, which force would be increased in time of war by the regular reserves and the Hungarian levies. When the next struggle should come Maria Theresa expected to be able to put into the field an army greatly enlarged in numbers and vastly improved in quality.¹

Next to an ample force and an efficient army, the success of the queen's projects seemed to depend on a wise choice of foreign allies. The issue of the pragmatic war had not entirely vindicated the system to which, mainly indeed from force of necessity, but partly also out of respect to the traditions of her house, she had adhered through eight long and trying years. More than once she had asked herself, in the anguish of defeat, whether the nominal friendship of England was not nearly as disastrous as the open hostility of France. As the war proceeded, these doubts became more acute. The vicissitudes of the struggle and the development of political relations lifted the rivalry of France and England prominently above the older issues, and this rivalry still offered to Austria a freedom of action which she had not originally enjoyed. Ought not this advantage to be seized? Ought not the court of Vienna to consult its best interests by suppressing prejudices which had lost their meaning, and substituting the friendship of an ancient but not implacable enemy for that of a dictatorial, selfish, and insincere ally? Or would it be better to adhere to the old alliance, in spite of proved defects, than to enter on a policy of uncertain adventure, with strange combinations to learn, and untried comrades to watch?

These problems engaged the earnest attention of Maria

¹ On these reforms cf. Arneth, vol. iv.; the papers of the Prussian chancellor Furst, in Ranke, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. xxx.; A. Wolf, *Oesterreich unter M. T.* The report of an English agent in 1753 put the total fighting strength of Austria at 195,000. Hardwicke MSS. vol. lxxv.

Theresa as soon as the conclusion of the peace gave her the necessary leisure. In March, 1749, she directed the ministers of the conference to submit each a written opinion on the system of foreign policy, which ought thence forward to be pursued by Austria.

With one significant exception, the ministers agreed substantially in urging an adherence to the old system. The exception was count Kaunitz, the youngest member of the conference. In a report, which exceeded the others in ability and boldness as much as it did in length, he advocated the adoption of a programme not impossible to carry out, he thought, in spite of its novelty and difficulties, and alone suited to the requirements of the situation. This was the policy of a reconciliation and an alliance with France. The object was to obtain security against the hostile enterprises of the king of Prussia; to weaken him, to humble his pride, and to recover the province which his arms had wrested from Austria.¹ The proposal was at once bitterly opposed by the emperor, who pronounced it unnatural, and unworthy of consideration. Some of the ministers were not less emphatic in their dissent. Even those who, like Harrach and Uhlfeld, were not averse to the French alliance in principle, were still sceptical about its feasibility. But there is reason to believe that Kaunitz's scheme found a prompt and unqualified supporter in Maria Theresa herself, to whose own views it perfectly corresponded; and before her earnest support the hostility of the other ministers, and even that of the emperor, her husband, gradually died away.

Yet the new policy was introduced slowly, and in a way not prematurely to alarm the naval powers. The first efforts of Austrian diplomacy followed closely the lines of the old system. Count Richecourt, the new ambassador at London, was instructed not only to give the most positive assurances of the intentions of his

Plan of
Kaunitz.

Austria and
England.

¹ Arneth, iv. 276.

court to fulfil strictly all the terms of existing engagements, but even to open negotiations with a view to enlarging their scope and efficiency. Two ends which he was especially charged to pursue, though desired by Austria for her own advantage, were still in such close harmony with the diplomacy of the past, that little opposition was offered to them at London. The one was the guaranty of England for those clauses of the treaty of Dresden favorable to Austria. The other was the accession of England to the Russo-Austrian treaty of 1746. Both were obtained in the course of the year 1750, though in the case of the Russian treaty the accession of George the Second was given only to the general articles, and did not include the far more dangerous secret stipulations.¹

The relations of England and Austria were not, however, marked by that perfect cordiality which ought to subsist between allies. On more than one occasion the empress-queen made known, by some course of action or tone of speech, her lively sense of the ill-treatment which she had suffered at the hands of England.

One of these occasions arose in connection with the King of the
Romans. scheme to elect the young archduke Joseph, son of Maria Theresa, king of the Romans. The scheme seems to have been proposed by George the Second as an act of courtesy to the house of Austria, and was supported by the English ministers as a measure of precaution for the future. It was highly desirable, from their point of view, that the succession in the Empire should be assured to an allied dynasty, instead of passing, as it otherwise might pass on the death of Francis the First, to some prince who, like Charles VII., would be a mere tool of

¹ Vide supra, p. 67. Arneth argues that, since the secret articles were communicated to England, they could not have been aimed at Prussia. *Gesch. Maria Theresias*, iv. 288. But may not the further fact that they were rejected by England prove that the ministers of George II. took the other view? Hanover was not included in the act of accession.

France and Prussia. But at Vienna the project was received with no gratitude and little interest.¹ The condition of affairs in the Empire was such that the empress had very little confidence — so the Austrian ambassador in London was instructed to reply — in a successful issue of the scheme; nor would success be desirable if it had to be reached by any sacrifice of honor and self-respect, or through new concessions on the part of Austria.² This was at least not an auspicious opening of the enterprise. But as the affair proceeded frictions arose at every step, and sharp language was used on either side. The urgent and somewhat peremptory tone of the English diplomats, the haughtiness and occasional petulance of Maria Theresa, and, more than all, the difficulty of apportioning the payments which had to be made to exacting electors, not only kept alive a warm feeling of irritation in both parties, but also protracted the negotiations over three or four years until an insuperable obstacle was reached. The votes of Mayence, Treves, Bavaria, Hanover, Bohemia, and Saxony were assured. But the elector-palatine made demands which, though long supported by England, were found exorbitant by Austria. He was encouraged in this policy by France and Prussia. The motives of France were obvious; and her interference, though indirect and irregular, was in line with her general diplomacy. But Frederic was an elector of the Empire, and he had a right not only to withhold the vote of Brandenburg, but also to interpose constitutional objections to the proposed manner of election. He denied that a mere majority of the college of electors was sufficient to chose a king of the Romans. The consent of the college of princes, he argued, was also necessary; and the uncertainty of the law gov-

¹ "The coldness and supineness of the court of Vienna," etc. Lord chancellor Hardwicke to the duke of Newcastle, 10 September, 1751; Coxe, *Pelham*, vol. ii. *passim*.

² Arneth, iv. 290, 291.

erning the case was so great that his contention had to be treated with respect. The efforts of England to gain the count-palatine, whose voice was not needed for a mere majority of the electoral college, was an indirect admission of this fact. But Maria Theresa finally refused to grant his terms, and by 1754 the failure of the plan seemed complete.¹

It so happened, too, that about the same time another question engaged the attention of the two courts, and revealed not less plainly the want of sympathy between them. This question concerned the defence of the Netherlands. Although the Netherlands were an Austrian possession, and Austria was bound by treaty to contribute to their defence, they really formed in a military sense part of the frontier of Holland, and thus indirectly of England. A few of the so-called barrier fortresses had Dutch garrisons under the terms of the treaty of Utrecht; the rest were reserved to Austria. But the court of Vienna regarded the Netherlands as a precarious possession. They were far removed from the other Hapsburg territories, and were immediately contiguous to a powerful and unfriendly state. It was difficult to make the province very prominent in any Austrian plan of operations; and the Vienna statesmen reasoned that, since England and Holland would have to guard the barrier in their own interest, it might be safely left to them. This astute conviction seems to underlie the Austrian policy in the negotiations for strengthening the defences of the province. Begun soon after the close of the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, they made little progress for several years. The anxiety and impatience of the English ministers were met at Vienna with indifference, evasion, insincerity, and unfriendliness. The empress-queen complained, and not without reason, that the barrier treaties

¹ Coxe, *Pelham*, ii. 281, 282; Pelham to Newcastle, 28 May, 1753.

robbed her of all the substance of sovereignty in the Netherlands. Her subjects were excluded from the commerce of the Scheldt. She had to furnish three fifths of the troops maintained in the province, and had to support even those furnished by Holland. And all this in order that a barrier might be set up between France and the two naval powers, for their immediate and almost exclusive benefit. The views thus put forward by the empress-queen, and the state of feeling between the parties, was little favorable to a successful result. In 1753 the English ministers sent to Vienna, as special envoy to reënforce sir Robert Keith, the accredited resident, sir Charles Hanbury Williams, their agent at the court of Saxony. But Williams, though a wit, scholar, and profigate, a member of Horace Walpole's circle, and a man of the world, surpassed even sir Thomas Robinson in the bluntness and ill-timed vigor of his discourse; gave personal offence to Maria Theresa; and injured the very cause which he was sent to support.

In the mean time the grand scheme of which Kaunitz had made himself the champion was not neglected. Soon after the close of the war diplomatic relations were resumed between France and Austria, at first France and Austria. through the agency of chargés d'affaires. These were superseded in 1750 by full ambassadors. The instructions issued to Blondel, the French chargé d'affaires, and to the marquis of Harcourt, the ambassador, were long and minute, free from anything which could suggest a change on the part of the French court in the policy of two hundred years, and indicating that Austria was still regarded as a rival to be distrusted and watched, not as a possible friend to be won by frank offers of reconciliation.¹ For Austrian ambassador at Versailles,

¹ *Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France: AUSTRIA*, edited by Albert Sorel, Paris, 1884. Instructions of 25 March, 1749, and 14 September, 1750, pp. 309-328.

the choice naturally fell upon Kaunitz. No other was so well fitted as he to fill what was at the time the most important part in the execution of the new system. The instructions to Kaunitz, written doubtless by himself, were in full harmony with the new policy which he was to represent. It was made his duty, while avoiding anything that could alarm the naval powers, to sound the French ministers on the possibility of a closer friendship between the courts of Vienna and Versailles. As soon as he had in a measure gained their confidence, he was artfully to excite their suspicions against the king of Prussia. This would be difficult, for Frederic had neglected no means to make his alliance seem indispensable to France; but the ambassador was left a wide discretion in the choice of tactics, and it was hoped that he would not be wholly unsuccessful.¹

Kaunitz was received with personal cordiality by Louis, but the French ministers gave no encouragement to his political schemes. A change in the department of foreign affairs, by which the marquis of Saint-Contest succeeded the marquis Puysieux, was not favorable to his plans. And Kaunitz himself suffered from frequent attacks of illness, which disabled him for weeks at a time. His reports were therefore far from encouraging. In one of them he even hinted at the possibility of complete failure, and seemed to suggest the necessity for a frank and sincere reconciliation with the king of Prussia.² But he himself denied subsequently that he had any intention of giving up the plan. It is possible that his only object was to prepare the empress for the scarcely less odious expedient of employing the services of madame de Pompadour.

Jeanne Antoinette Poisson d'Étiolles, marchioness of

¹ Instructions of the 13th of September, 1750, apud Arneth, iv. 324, 325.

² Arneth, iv. 332, 333.

Pompadour, the successor of madame de Châteauroux as the mistress of Louis, was now nearly at the height of her power. Of low extraction and lit-^{Madame de Pompadour.} tle culture, with an accent which made the courtiers stare, and manners which were easy rather than correct, she won her place, in 1745, not more by her beauty than by the adroitness and audacity with which she approached the king.¹ But once installed as the recognized mistress, she soon acquired an authority which ended only with her death. To maintain her position, she adopted a careful scheme of policy, which was based on an exact knowledge of the character of the king. But it was a low, selfish, and cynical policy; and it places her distinctly below some of the other reigning favorites of the kings of France. She desired power only for the sake of power. She liked to be an object of flattery and adulation; to live in luxury; to dispense bounty and patronage; to receive ambassadors in her boudoir; to be surrounded by poets and artists, scholars and philosophers; to be the centre of a showy, brilliant, and fascinating society. When her own charms began to wane, she founded the infamous *parc-aux-cerfs*, which enabled her to gratify the passions of Louis without admitting any permanent rival to her own claims and prerogatives. Such was her power that all foreign envoys, neglecting the queen, paid their court to the haughty favorite who had usurped her place.

Kaunitz was not affected by any scruples which could prevent him from obeying the ruling fashion. It is certain that he did not neglect the Pompa-<sup>Kaunitz
chancellor
of state.</sup> dour, and that at one period of his embassy he cultivated her friendship with considerable zeal.² But there is no proof that this was done in pursuance of any understanding with Maria Theresa. Indeed, in a special

¹ Vide *Mémoires historiques et anecdotiques du duc de Richelieu*, Paris 1829, vol. v. pp. 248, 249.

² Arneth, ubi supra.

case where he sought her intercession, the immediate results were not favorable ; and in general it cannot be said that he made, with or without her, any essential progress with his new policy during the whole time that he remained at Paris. In 1753 he was recalled to Vienna, and made chancellor of state. Count Uhlfeld was honorably retired ; Bartenstein was deprived of the power that he had long so jealously wielded ; and a reorganization was effected which gave Kaunitz the almost uncontrolled direction of the foreign department.

The reserve and dissimulation which Kaunitz, even in his new position, still found it necessary to practise, easily imposed on sir Hanbury Williams. In a long letter to London, the special envoy enlarges on the good qualities of the chancellor ; defends him against the charge of frivolity and foppishness ; and even describes him as devoted to the old system of an alliance between Austria and the naval powers.¹

This dispatch of Williams contains, however, one significant reserve. He found Kaunitz filled with admirable sentiments upon all subjects except one ; but that one was precisely the most important of all those under discussion between the courts of Vienna and London, the barrier treaties. Here the chancellor was inflexible. He regarded the treaties as imposing a species of servitude upon the empress-queen in her own dominions, and he turned a deaf ear to all of the special envoy's not very adroit representations. Yet in spite of this, Williams, with singular optimism, professed to reconcile his failure with the theory that Kaunitz was firmly convinced of the necessity of tying more closely the knot of friendship

¹ Williams to the duke of Newcastle, 15 July, 1753. Hardwicke Papers, vol. lxxv. It appears from this interesting report that Williams and the English ministers were not ignorant of Kaunitz's original preference for a French alliance, of which, however, he is described as returning from Paris completely cured.

between her imperial majesty and her ancient allies, the maritime powers. He seemed to believe that the matter would be finally settled, like previous controversies of the kind, by the practical submission of the empress-queen.

The diplomatic position of Austria had, however, at this time, unusual elements of strength, most of which were not unknown to the English and Hanoverian statesmen. One of these was the alliance with Russia. Another was the coldness or even enmity subsisting between Prussia and England. A third was the fatal rivalry between England and France, which was already leading to acts of violence in India and America, and threatening to spread the flames of war at any moment over the continent of Europe. These were opportunities which a statesman like Kaunitz was certain not to neglect.

The friendly relations between Austria and Russia which began in 1744, and took formal shape in the treaty of 1746, had been considerably Prussia and Russia. strengthened by the course of recent events. In the same degree as Elizabeth was drawn toward the court of Vienna, she was alienated from and embittered against that of Berlin. The gossip of the time, which modern historians still believe, ascribed this fact to the unwise sarcasms of Frederic, which had reached the ears of the empress.¹ The theory is easily reconciled with what the world knows about the unruly tongue of the king of Prussia. But in any event Elizabeth hated Frederic, and her sentiments were artfully encouraged by Bestuschef for political ends. In 1749 an actual collision was threatened. Russia had been engaged for a year or more in intrigues for changing the order of succession in Sweden to the prejudice of Frederic's brother-in-law, the heir apparent, and for increasing her influence at Stockholm; what was supposed to be the mortal illness of the reigning king seemed to offer the

¹ See in Herrmann, v. 93 n., the extract from a report of count Lynar, the Danish envoy at St. Petersburg.

proper occasion. The empress assembled an army corps on the frontier of Finland. Threatening manifestoes were addressed to Stockholm. But these movements were known to Frederic, who by the treaty of 1747 was pledged to defend Sweden in case of attack.¹ In 1748 France had acceded to this alliance. Now, on the approach of danger, Frederic made earnest preparations to meet it by putting his regiments in order for war, and sending his generals elaborate plans of action. These were followed in May, 1750, by an energetic and almost menacing protest addressed to the Russian court.² Bestuschef received it with apparent defiance, but it had an unmistakable effect.³ The Franco-Prussian guaranty for Sweden, the active military preparations of Frederic, the refusal of England to furnish naval support, and the poor condition of the imperial army, compelled the sullen relinquishment of a plan formed with such care, and undertaken with such confidence.⁴ But the defeat naturally intensified Elizabeth's hatred of the prince to whose firmness and dexterity she mainly owed it.

Not long afterwards Gross, her envoy at Berlin, was ordered to return to Russia without taking the usual leave. The ostensible reasons, as given by Bestuschef, for this step, were that Frederic had refused to discharge certain Russian soldiers illegally detained in his service; and that Gross had been treated with discourtesy by a master of ceremonies, or some official of the palace.⁵ These charges were of course repudiated by the court of Prussia. Frederic believed, on the contrary, or pretended to believe, that the affair was

Rupture of
diplomatic
relations.

¹ Supra, p. 69.

² Déclaration verbale à faire à la cour de Russie. *Pr. Staatschriften*, ii. 232, 233.

³ Report of Warendorf, Prussian envoy at St. Petersburg, 4 July, 1750. *Polit. Corresp.*, viii. 19.

⁴ *Heldengeschichte*, iii. 274-276.

⁵ *Polit. Corresp.*, viii. 209.

simply a plot concocted by the courts of Vienna and London, in the hope, first, to embroil Prussia more deeply with the empress Elizabeth, and, second, to shake his opposition to the election of a king of the Romans.¹ But he responded promptly to the challenge of Elizabeth by ordering Warendorf, the Prussian chargé d'affaires at St. Petersburg, to follow the example of Gross. Warendorf took his leave accordingly in the same abrupt manner, after refusing to receive an insulting communication which Bestuschef sent him at the last moment. All diplomatic relations between the two countries then ceased. A series of acrimonious letters was exchanged, which the news journals published, thus increasing the scandal and the irritation.²

Out of all these incidents the court of Austria drew no little profit. It had put no obstacles in the way of the Russian projects; and although its course was not open or straightforward, it was also not at all unfriendly, and thus offered a thrifty contrast to the peremptory and unequivocal language of the king of Prussia. The crisis thus left the credit of Maria Theresa higher than ever at St. Petersburg. So long as the pecuniary demands of Elizabeth and Bestuschef were satisfied, there was no danger. Austria herself was poor; and but two powers in Europe, France and England, had the means for bribery at St. Petersburg. Of these two England was the actual if not the preferred ally; and Kaunitz was therefore in a measure dependent on the purse of England. But the English statesmen regarded the Russian alliance as not less valuable for their own purposes. They all complained bitterly of the price, but some of them admitted that it was necessary to pay it;³ and as Austria had influence at St. Petersburg, which she

Anglo-Austrian intrigues at St. Petersburg.

¹ Frederic to Chambrier, 19 January, 1751.

² *Pr. Staatsschriften*, ii. 242-246; Schlosser, iii. 282, 283.

³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, 17 September, 1751.

used diligently, though not always successfully, to reduce the terms, the English court was not less dependent on the favor of Austria.¹ Such was the relation of Russia to the leading powers of Europe. In 1753 an imperial council held at Moscow solemnly resolved that it ought to be a cardinal article of Russian policy to prevent the further aggrandizement of the kingdom of Prussia, and, when occasion offered, to coöperate with Austria, Saxony, and England in reducing it to its original insignificance.²

The strained relations which had for some time subsisted between England and Prussia seemed also favorable to the policy of Kaunitz. They made it the more necessary for England to meet the demands of the Russian court, and lessened the chances of a change of front which should unite England and Prussia.³ Frederic had not fallen into this situation blindly and helplessly. So firm was his distrust of English statesmen, so fixed his belief in the sinister influence of England at St. Petersburg, that he made little effort to establish better relations with the court of St. James; met nearly all overtures with coldness; and in general pursued a line of conduct which seemed almost intended to provoke a rupture.

His efforts to prevent the election of a king of the Romans were indeed consistent with his general policy. Al-

¹ Hardwicke to the duke of Newcastle, $\frac{1}{4}$ ⁰ September, 1751; Arneth, iv. 368.

² The text in Hertzberg, *Recueil*, i. 248, 249, from the copy sent to Dresden by Funcke, the Saxon envoy at St. Petersburg. But Droysen, V. iv. 383 n., says that Hertzberg gives only articles 1, 2, and 15 of the entire resolution. These were, however, the ones specially directed at Prussia.

³ Newcastle writes, $\frac{1}{4}$ ⁷ September, 1750: "Prussia has now thrown off the mask. . . . There is no way of parrying the stroke . . . but by Russia. . . . If therefore . . . we should give such a moderate subsidy to Russia as should enable them to have such a body of troops constantly on their frontiers as would keep the king of Prussia in awe," etc.

Unfriendly
relations of
Prussia and
England.

though this was a scheme in which George II. took the leading part, its success would have consolidated the Austro-English alliance, and given the house of Hapsburg increased weight in German affairs, so that Frederic's opposition to it was natural, and in a sense necessary. But the like excuse cannot be made for the arbitrary measures adopted in the case of the captured Prussian ships.

These were merchant vessels, thirty-three in number, which, while on their way to French ports during the recent war, had been captured by English cruisers, taken into English waters, and condemned by the English courts of admiralty to the loss of their cargoes as enemy's goods, or as contraband of war. Frederic denied the legality of these captures. He cited an alleged promise of lord Carteret that the Prussian merchant marine should be placed on the footing of the most favored neutrals, that is to say, those whose commerce in enemy's goods not contraband of war was protected by special treaties with England, Prussia herself having none. He insisted that the rule that the flag covered the cargo was a part of international law. And he contested the definitions of contraband laid down in the decisions of the English prize courts. From time to time these points were pressed upon the British ministers, but with little vigor and no success. In 1748 Michell, the Prussian resident at London, was instructed to intimate that unless satisfaction was given to the injured Prussian subjects, it might become necessary to indemnify them out of the Silesian debt, the last payment on which had yet to be made.¹ This threat produced only the reply that England would regard such a measure as cancelling her guaranty of Silesia.² No steps were, however, immediately

Case of the
captured
Prussian
ships.

¹ Fichel to Podewils, 29 January, 1748. On the Silesian loan, vide vol. ii. p. 185. The outstanding instalment amounted to nearly 200,000 thalers.

² *Polit. Corresp.*, iv. 280, 281.

taken to carry this menace into effect. Frequent representations were indeed made on the subject, but they led to no result; the English government insisted on the correctness of its position in international law, and on the obligation of neutrals to respect the decisions of belligerent prize-courts. But in 1751 Frederic proceeded to sterner measures. He appointed a commission, with Cocceji at its head, to examine the legal points in the controversy, and to report what, if any, indemnity was due to the owners of the vessels and cargoes.¹ The report of this commission, made the following year, fully sustained the king's contention. Some one hundred and eighty thousand thalers were found to be due Prussian subjects for vessels detained or cargoes condemned; and Frederic promptly ordered this amount to be deducted from the unpaid residue of the Silesian debt, and placed on deposit pending further negotiations with England. The balance was tendered to the English creditors in exchange for receipts in full.²

It was a singular, and, if foreseen, a significant coincidence, that just at this time Frederic gave another affront

¹ Frederic to Cocceji, 24 November, 1751.

² This dispute justly forms one of Martens' "*Causes célèbres du droit des gens*." The principal documents may also be found in most of the historical compilations of the time, e. g. in *Heldengeschichte*, iii. 430 et seq., and in the second volume of the *Preussische Staatsschriften*, with valuable notes by R. Koser. The late professor Trendlenburg made an elaborate defence of Frederic in an academic discourse, entitled *Friedrichs des Grossen Verdienst um das Völkerrecht im Seekrieg*, published at Leipsic in 1871. He claimed for Frederic the merit of defending a cause, the freedom of neutral commerce, which finally triumphed in the Declaration of Paris of 1856; but this by no means proves that he was defending the international law of his own age. See, in the works of Montesquieu, the author's letter to the abbé Guasco, 5 March, 1753, and in Vattel, *Le droit des gens*, liv. II. ch. vii. § 84, opinions favorable to the English cause, or to the masterly statement of the English cause, which was drawn up by the solicitor-general Murray, afterwards lord Mansfield.

to England in the choice which he made of an envoy to the court of Versailles. The faithful Chamberlain, who for years had served Prussian interests at Paris, died in the summer of 1751. Frederic sends a Jacobite as envoy to Paris. George Keith, lord-marshal of Scotland, was named as his successor. But the lord-marshal, as an ardent Jacobite, and a Jacobite who had taken part in the enterprises of the pretender, was regarded in England as a fugitive from justice, and his appointment seemed a deliberate insult. Colonel Yorke, the English envoy at Paris, asked Puitsieux for an explanation, and received a sharp rebuke.¹ It was apparently judged unwise to lodge a formal protest at Berlin. But the excitement in London, though brief, was intense. It was earnestly discussed whether Michell should not be handed his passports, and diplomatic relations with Prussia be suspended.² Calmer counsels in the end prevailed, but the incident long continued to be a cause of ill-feeling in England.

To these causes of alienation must be added frequent and animated controversies over the state of diplomatic representation between the two courts. English and Prussian diplomatists. Soon after the second Silesian war, the English cabinet sent to Berlin, at Frederic's request, sir Thomas Villiers, who had coöperated in the treaty of Dresden.³ He was followed by Henry Legge as special envoy. Legge's mission was to establish closer relations with Prussia; but either because, as English authorities state, he exceeded his instructions, or because, as Prussian writers contend, the conclusion of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle relieved the anxiety of the London cabinet, his negotiations were disavowed and he himself was recalled.⁴

¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, $\frac{1}{17}$ September, 1751.

² Newcastle, 6 September; Hardwicke to Newcastle, 10 September, 1751.

³ *Supra*, p. 82.

⁴ Coxe's *Pelham*, i. 440, 441.

Next came sir Hanbury Williams, without, however, relinquishing his other position of envoy to the court of August the Third. But Williams was obnoxious to Frederic almost from the first; and after repeated demands, involving much angry correspondence, his recall was finally obtained. Williams returned to Dresden filled with a lively hatred of the prince who had treated him so inhospitably.¹ Then followed an interregnum, which marked the displeasure of the English court. The legation of Prussia at London passed through fewer changes, but it was not the less affected by the unhappy state of the relations between the two courts. On the retirement of Andrié the king at first designated Klinggraeffen as his successor. His mission was, however, a brief one. He was recalled from his post in the course of the disputes over sir Hanbury Williams, and the secretary of legation, Michell, remained in charge of Prussian interests at London.

The dissensions between the two courts gave a powerful impulse to the intrigues which, in the course of the year 1753, nearly led to war. In January of that year Frederic received from Dresden, through one Menzel, a clerk of the Saxon archives, whom he had bribed, a copy of the secret articles of the Austro-Russian treaty of 1746.² What he had before suspected was now placed beyond any doubt.³ The two imperial courts had planned his destruction; Saxony was in the secret, if not in the plot; and the known relations of

More plots
at St. Peters-
burg.

¹ Frederic to Maltzahn, resident at Dresden, 5 March, 1751. The manner in which Williams looked at things in Berlin is shown by some of his letters, published in the appendix to the first volume of Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Second*, 2d ed., London, 1847. Cf. Droysen, V. iv. 241.

² Frederic to Maltzahn at Dresden, 1 February, 1753. The price paid for this particular bit of treachery was 500 thalers.

³ On these suspicions see, e. g., Frederic to Klinggraeffen, 19 July, 1749.

England to all the parties made it probable that the coalition would want neither ships nor money. This belief was strengthened by further reports which the faithful Menzel continued to send. His contributions included all the important dispatches of the Saxon agents, Flemming at Vienna and Funcke at St. Petersburg, both of them unusually well-informed diplomatists, who reported without reserve everything that came to their knowledge.¹ In one Weingarten, an attaché of the Austrian embassy at Berlin, another man was found who for Prussian gold was ready to betray his trust.² From these sources, and the reports of his own envoys, Frederic was enabled to follow the course of the intrigue with considerable precision. Much, indeed, was mere rumor. Much was vague and unintelligible, or open to more than one construction. But several facts stood prominently forth incontestable, and these seem to justify all the anxiety of the king. It was known that the allied courts were negotiating actively for the adhesion of Saxony to the treaty of 1746, and that Austria was willing, as a concession to August, to regard the partition treaty of 1745, which the peace of Dresden had in effect abrogated, as still in force.³ There were authentic accounts of activity in Russian military circles, and of the movement of troops toward the frontier of Preussen. Austria was massing forces in Bohemia.⁴ The rest depended only on the purse

¹ Menzel was subsequently arrested and tried at Warsaw. Carlyle, iv. 386-388, gives extracts from the court protocol, including the prisoner's own account of his treason. Cf. *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iv. 18, 19.

² On the Weingarten incident, see Arneth, iv. 475 et seq. For a partial list of other spies and traitors employed at this time by Frederic, see Huschberg-Wuttke, *Die Kriegsjahre 1756-1758*, Leipsic, 1807, pp. lxx., lxxi.

³ Frederic to Maltzahn, 10 April, to Klinggræffen, at Vienna, 3 March, to the earl-marshal, 8 November, 1753.

⁴ Droysen, V. iv. 361; *Polit. Corresp.*, vols. ix. and x., *passim*.

of England, or the willingness of the cabinet to open it. Russia demanded over two hundred thousand pounds annually for keeping in readiness in time of peace, and a yearly subsidy of nearly seven hundred thousand in case of war.¹

The duke of Newcastle was for compliance. But Pelham, more cautious, more favorable to peace, and a better politician, hesitated. He was unwilling to ask the parliament, on the eve of new elections, for so large a sum; the proposition would be attacked as made only in the interest of Hanover; and the treaty, if concluded, would be likely to excite the king of Prussia to violent measures.² Counter-propositions were, therefore, sent to Russia, and the negotiations were prolonged.

In the mean time several things occurred to strengthen the position of Frederic, and cool the ardor of his enemies. The autumn manœuvres of the Prussian army brought together at Spandau fifty thousand troops, fully equipped and in readiness for an immediate campaign. Saxony made an arrangement in regard to the outstanding exchequer bills, which removed an active cause of dispute with Prussia, and correspondingly lessened the interest of the Dresden court in offensive projects.³ France gave notice to the English cabinet that if Prussia should be attacked, a French army would march to her support, under the terms of the treaty of 1741.⁴ These circumstances, and the reflection that in case Prussia should be driven to action the first blow

¹ Full details of the negotiations, as reported by Guy Dickens, British envoy in Russia, together with the Russian project of a convention to be concluded with England, the whole stolen by Menzel, and forwarded to Berlin by Maltzahn, are given in Frederic to the lord-marshal, 14 September, 1753. *Polit. Corresp.*, x. 74 et seq.

² Coxe, *Pelham*, ii. 282, 283; Newcastle to Hardwicke, 21 September, 1753; Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 272. Cf. Schlosser, ii. 299.

³ Convention of 3 November, 1753. Droysen, V. iv. 384.

⁴ Michell, 26 October, 1753. *Polit. Corresp.*, x. 149.

would fall upon Hanover, taught the English court the need of prudence, and delayed the signature of the Russian treaty.

Yet these facts and these considerations might have wanted sufficient weight if it had not been that the far graver disputes between England and ^{England and} France ^{France.} were now approaching a crisis. In the statesmanship of Great Britain these took precedence before all other issues. It is true that of the disputes and collisions, which finally led to war, only one was strictly European. This concerned the fortifications of Dunkirk, which, in violation of several treaties, and in spite of many protests, the French were again restoring. All the rest arose far away from Europe, in those distant parts of the world where the colonial aspirations of the two states came into conflict. There were mutual aggressions in India, rival claims in North America, disputes over boundaries loosely drawn, and quarrels over treaties purposely left obscure. Where should the frontiers of Nova Scotia be traced? Was equity on the side of Dupleix or of Clive in the struggle which established the supremacy of England in the Carnatic? Such were the specific and immediate issues between the two nations; but it was their accumulated force which made war inevitable. In combination they are the incidents or phases of a fierce antipathy, which could hardly pass into the acute form of war without disturbing the general peace of Europe.

This was a truth the full significance of which Newcastle failed to grasp. Yet Newcastle was now the most important person in the English government. He had been elevated to the treasury on the death of his brother, Henry Pelham, in 1754, and thus became prime minister of England, at a most critical juncture, with no other qualifications for office than a certain officious love of work, singular skill in the administration of patronage, and personal though not political honesty.

Newcastle
and his
cabinet.

Then followed two years of combined folly and weakness, almost without a parallel in the history of England. Carteret reappeared, indeed, as lord Granville; but it was a Carteret subdued by inaction, debauchery, and old age; without the fire which had once made him a great power in debate; a stranger to the ambitious views which had formerly terrified his colleagues in the cabinet of Henry Pelham; a weak, infirm, disappointed man, content, with occasional displays of masculine good sense, to serve the feeble cause of Newcastle. William Pitt, the rising leader of the time, was in practical opposition. The ministry had no cohesion, no strength, no courage, no policy. Its orders were vague, fitful, contradictory, now timid and hesitating, now rash and reckless; so that the subordinates, acting on no uniform policy, erred sometimes through excess of caution, and sometimes from excess of zeal.¹ And all this time the cabinet of Versailles acted with the most studied moderation. The party of peace was plainly determined that the war, if it must come, should at least come as the consequence of English aggressions, and with England distinctly in the wrong. Their preparations were therefore for defence rather than for attack. They restored English vessels captured by their cruisers. They dissembled their indignation at what they regarded as English outrages in India and America. Yet in spite of the pacific language, measures, and sentiments of the court of Versailles, which were known at London,² the state of feeling on the English side of the channel was now such that even the French army of defence became in effect a challenge, and hastened the course of events.

The approach of this crisis was for many reasons unwelcome to the king of Prussia. In general, indeed, any-

¹ Mahon, *Hist. of Eng.*, iv. 71, 72.

² See in Raumer, *Beitrag*, ii. 284, 285, the report of the English envoy at Paris, 12 March, 1755, which testifies to the peaceful dispositions of Rouillé and other French ministers. Cf. Walpole, *Geo. II.* ii. 33.

thing that engaged the attention of England elsewhere and thus drew her away from the Austro-Russian machinations, of which he felt his state to ^{Views of Frederic.} be the intended victim, increased his sense of security. But this was only a partial view of the situation. By the treaty of 1741, Frederic had guaranteed the territory of France, and in case of attack was bound to furnish aid for its defence. In strict fulfilment of its pledges, which were mutual, France had made the warning declaration of 1753, and perhaps stayed the hand of Prussia's enemies. Now there was a chance to return the favor. Frederic did not deny the obligation, which in effect was undeniable. But he held that the dispute between France and England was purely a colonial one, while the treaty of 1741 applied only to Europe. Technically this view was of course correct. But the relations between France and Prussia had been governed since 1748 rather by the unwritten law of common interests than by the strict letter of formal treaties; and Frederic was forced to consider the question, whether he would adhere to his old ally in obedience to a general system, or elude responsibilities, embark on a policy of adventure, and entrust his safety to the chances of the hour.

During this period the relations between the two courts had been friendly, and at times even cordial. ^{France and Prussia.} There had been quarrels, but they were the quarrels of lovers, followed by renewed protestations of respect and affection. Neither power had indeed much confidence in the sincerity of the other. Frederic always took a cynical view of international morality, and ridiculed sentiment in politics; besides which he looked upon French statecraft with profound suspicion, except when he looked upon it with contempt. At Versailles there was equal distrust of Prussia, only too clearly justified by a long and unhappy experience. But, in spite of all the grounds for discord and alienation, the force of common interests held the

two powers together, and gave them the character of allies in nearly every great campaign of European diplomacy.

To Prussia the value of this relation was enormous. The position of France, as well in a military as in a political sense, was far more secure, and for that reason far more independent. She was inaccessible to attack from Russia; England could reach her only on the ocean and in the colonies; the situation of the Netherlands held Holland in check. At Constantinople the influence of France was so great that she practically held the sword of Turkey suspended over Austria and Russia. Several of the lesser German states were in her pay. Sweden, an ancient ally, was still under her control. And she knew that the empress-queen, solely engaged in plans for the reconquest of Silesia, was condemned to inaction in all other fields, and even warmly desired a French alliance. Vastly different was the position of Prussia. Living at best in an armed truce with Austria; estranged from Russia; on ill terms with England; menaced by a dangerous combination; and without other allies except Sweden — to Prussia the friendship and support of France seemed so vitally important that hardly any price would be too great to pay. As the outlook in Europe grew darker, this position needed only the stronger support. Menzel furnished nothing but sinister news. The Austro-Russian treaty of 1746, the partition treaty of 1745, the efforts to bring Saxony into the plot, the subsidy negotiations between England and Russia, the rupture of diplomatic relations with St. Petersburg, the dispute with England, — all these things seemed to make it the duty of Frederic to hold firmly to the only important ally that he had. Yet this duty was one which, owing to the character of the persons who, directly or indirectly, by right of office or by force of intrigue, guided the policy of France, could hardly be performed without some sacrifice of self-respect.

Value of
the French
alliance to
Prussia.

Louis the Fifteenth had long since lost every sentiment of manhood that he may originally have possessed. Feeble, suspicious, impulsive, deceitful; ^{Louis the Fifteenth.} unwilling to trust his own ministers; the tool of intrigues which he vainly tried to guide; and corrupted body and soul by the infamous orgies of the *parc-aux-cerfs*, Louis the Well-Beloved, the father of his flock, who had proved so woefully unequal to the crisis of 1744, was the monarch who had to direct the affairs of France during the events that led up to the crisis of 1756. Frederic justly despised this anointed libertine. He had directed against him some of his most licentious verses, and these had not escaped the knowledge of their victim. But he continued to address his ally officially in terms of the greatest deference; and Louis, who was insensible to ridicule, and had perhaps been taught to regard the king of Prussia as a privileged character, replied with compliments not less profuse.

In the department of foreign affairs the frequent changes brought no improvement in quality. The ^{Fall of} marquis d'Argenson was dismissed in 1746. ^{D'Argenson.} His fall, which was not less sudden than his rise, and occurred, too, just after his diplomacy had been crowned by the Saxon marriage, was mainly due to the influence of marshal Noailles, who in a long memorial to the king accused him of want of plan and want of industry, of leaving his envoys without instructions, of making his decisions rashly, and of provoking discontent as well at home as abroad.¹ Most of these charges were unfounded, and even those which had some basis were exaggerated by the intense prejudices of the marshal. He himself had the title of minister, without any portfolio or much responsibility. His honesty and patriotism were undoubted, and his experience gave him a claim to respect; but he had grown

¹ Flassan, v. 347, 348; Chambrier's report, 20 February, 1747; *Polit. Corresp.*, v. 336, 337.

more and more dogmatic with advancing years, was excessively garrulous, and took great delight in writing long, pedantic, and fatherly dissertations on the proper policy of the French crown. No diplomatic problem arose, no new turn of events occurred, which failed to set his pen in motion. He was a species of censor, a watchful, restless, irrepressible censor, upon all the ministers of the cabinet, and when he tired of D'Argenson he coolly wrote his edict of dismissal. A fellow doctrinaire was intolerable. The marquis resigned his portfolio, returned to his books, and left the way open to a series of incapable successors.

The names of Puitsieux, Saint-Contest, Rouillé, stand for so many stages in the course of mediocrity ; while to the general crime of mediocrity each of these added some special vice or vices, which gave character to his administration. The marquis Puitsieux, though a man of good motives and intentions, was conservative, cautious, and even timid. Saint-Contest was indolent and procrastinating.¹ Rouillé's ignorance of law, history, and politics led him into blunders which would disgrace a schoolboy. One of his discoveries was that the archduke Joseph would become king of the Romans by right, and without the formality of an election, on reaching his majority.² The truth is, however, that the Rouillés and Saint-Contests were not so much individual anomalies as the products of a system, a system for which they were not responsible, a system maintained by the combined forces of scandal, intrigue, licentiousness, and corruption. In general no man could become minister of foreign affairs in France without the approval of madame de Pompadour. She aided in the overthrow of the marquis d'Argenson, and her hostility pursued his brother, the secretary of war.

¹ D'Argenson, iv. 41. On Puitsieux and Saint-Contest, see the similar views of Frederic and Kaunitz in *Polit. Corresp.*, vol. ix., and Arnoeth, iv. 335, 545 n., 421.

² *Polit. Corresp.*, x. 411.

She caused the disgrace of Maurepas. She barred the path of preferment to Belleisle. Machault, Séchelles, Saint-Contest, Florentin, Puitsieux, Rouillé, were her own creatures, or were supported in office by her favor.¹ One or two of these were indeed not without merit; Machault especially had made a considerable name by the boldness and energy of his war against the clergy; Séchelles had proved in the army his power to control the sources of supply in a state. But as few men of spirit, independence, and capacity for affairs would accept office when office implied such a degrading servitude, Louis was too often forced to choose his advisers from the imbeciles, sycophants, libertines, and panders who flocked about the court of the favorite. All this was no secret to Frederic. He early discovered in madame de Pompadour, as his own letters show, not indeed an open and avowed, but a secret, a powerful, and perhaps a controlling influence in French political councils.

In the gilded salons of Paris and Versailles it was an accepted article of faith that the mistress of Louis the Fifteenth was a mortal enemy of the Frederic and Pompadour. king of Prussia. Yet the common account of this enmity rests only on the authority of Voltaire; and Voltaire himself leaves much to desire in the way both of precision and of consistency. He states in a private letter that when he reached Berlin in 1750, he made the compliments of the marchioness, as commanded by her, to his royal host, to which Frederic replied contemptuously that he was not acquainted with her.² But Voltaire also added that he would be careful not to let her learn what reception the message had met; and, so far as his published correspondence shows, he kept his word. He wrote to the Pompa-

¹ Lacretelle, *Histoire de France pendant le 18ième Siècle*, 2d ed. Paris, 1810, vol. iii. pp. 158 et seq.

² The familiar "je ne la connais pas." Voltaire to madame Denis, 11 August, 1750.

dour that Achilles returned the compliments of Venus.¹ This was indeed soon after his arrival in Berlin, when he was anxious to retain the favor both of the marchioness and of Frederic, and when a little dissimulation with each would not have hurt his fortunes. Yet in the *Vie privée du roi de Prusse*, that studied collection of everything which could make Frederic hateful, no mention is made of the incident. The *Siècle de Louis XV.* alludes only in general terms to the sarcasms which had offended two powerful persons at the court of Louis, and offers nothing more specific.² Frederic's own history of this period is silent on the subject. The only corroborative evidence that I can find in the king's own writings is a letter to Voltaire, some years later, in which he defends himself against the charge of needlessly offending the marchioness, by the observation that she had been guilty of presumption and disrespect.³

In fact, however, Frederic by no means neglected this important source of influence at Versailles. He could not have forgotten, at the time when he seemed to accept Voltaire's somewhat complimentary reproof, and gave the above excuse in reply, that on several occasions between the years 1748 and 1756 he had made earnest efforts to gain the Pompadour for his interests. He made at least one inquiry about the extent of her credit and influence just before Voltaire's arrival in Berlin.⁴ A year later he returns to the subject, tentatively

His efforts
to gain her
support.

¹ Dans ces lieux jadis peu connus

Vos complimens sont parvenus :

Vos myrtes sont dans cet asile

Avec les lauriers confondus :

J'ai l'honneur de la part d'Achille

De rendre grâces à Vénus.

² *Œuvres de Voltaire*, xix. 267. The editor adds in a note that by one of these the Pompadour was meant, which is probable. See also *Mémoires de madame de Hausset*, p. 157.

³ Frederic to Voltaire, 21 June, 1760.

⁴ Frederic to Chambrier, 29 November, 1749.

as before, but with his purpose somewhat more clearly in view.¹ The following spring he threw off all reserve. Chambrier was instructed that, since the king in treating with France had in view only the good of his affairs, and was indifferent to whom, or to which sex, he addressed himself, he might make as many visits and show as many attentions to madame de Pompadour, nay, even insinuate such assurances on the king's part, as he in his judgment might think advisable.² These visits and insinuations Frederic seems to have thought had proved effective. The earl-marshal, on departing for Paris as Chambrier's successor, was assured that madame de Pompadour could be counted among the friends of Prussia.³ But from this delusion the king soon recovered. Not long afterwards he urges upon Keith the necessity of securing the marchioness, and inquires what means would be the most efficacious to that end.⁴ The envoy intimated that bribes would not be accepted, or at least would have no effect.⁵ During the next two years, 1754 and 1755, the favorite was an object of inquiry, but not of active solicitation. Frederic was in a measure relieved, by the events and circumstances above described, from fear of immediate danger; and the instructions issued to the Prussian legation at Paris conformed to this change in the situation.

The earl-marshal had in the mean time left the field of diplomacy, and gone into a species of official though honorable retirement as governor of Neuchâtel. He was succeeded as envoy at Paris

Knyphausen
envoy at
Paris.

¹ Frederic to Chambrier, 26 December, 1750.

² Frederic to Chambrier, 29 March, 1751.

³ Instructions for the earl-marshal. *Polit. Corresp.*, viii. 438-440.

⁴ Frederic to the earl-marshal, 28 November, 1752.

⁵ *Polit. Corresp.*, ix. 297. I have treated the relations of Frederic and madame de Pompadour at greater length in an article published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1887. Short passages from the article are transcribed in these and other paragraphs.

by the baron Knyphausen, his own secretary of legation. Knyphausen was a young member of a family which had furnished many useful servants to the kings of Prussia, and he entered the profession of diplomacy with great natural gifts, improved by careful and systematic training. He was active, alert, sagacious; affable and polished in his manners; and a general favorite in society. The infirm condition of the earl-marshal had thrown much of the responsible work of the legation upon him, and he had performed it with a tact and good taste which left no room for jealousy. Frederic learned, though slowly, to regard him as one of the most capable of his diplomatists.

The representation of France at Berlin had been during this period in the hands of a succession of men, not all of whom were equally agreeable to Frederic. In 1749 Valori, after an absence of some length, returned to his old post, but was soon again recalled and sent elsewhere. Frederic keenly regretted his loss; for Valori, a favorite butt for the royal pleasantries, was also a firm friend of the Prussian alliance, and was thus politically as well as personally acceptable.¹ He was followed by lord Tyrconnell, an Irish Jacobite in the service of France. The presence of this personage at Berlin was not less offensive to England than that of the lord-marshal at Paris; but he did not have even the advantage of Frederic's favor, and died in 1752 without having done anything to strengthen the alliance of the two courts.² Next came the chevalier de la Touche. He so far enjoyed the confidence of Louis as to be admitted to the secret correspondence, and was at first gladly welcomed by Frederic; but he soon fell into discredit at Berlin, and failed to give satisfaction to his superiors at Ver-

¹ See, e. g., Frederic to Chambrier, 4 August, 1749, and *Polit. Corresp.*, vol. vii. *passim*.

² Frederic to Darget, August, 1752, to the earl-marshal, 16 June, 1753; *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iv. 17.

sailles.¹ In the course of the year 1755 it was determined to recall him as soon as a suitable successor could be found. Valori was mentioned, greatly of course to Frederic's delight.² But Knyphausen thought it probable that a military officer would be sent, whose duty it would be to concert with Frederic a plan of operations against the common enemy on the basis of existing treaties.³

These treaties, two in number, that of 1741 and that of 1744, would expire nearly at the same time, in 1756. There was, besides, the treaty of guar-
Treaty ties
of France
and Prussia.
 anty with Sweden, to which both states were parties, and a subsidy treaty with the duke of Brunswick. Under the terms of the Brunswick treaty the duke engaged to furnish a certain contingent of troops for eventual use against Russia, while France was to pay for them, and Prussia to act as paymaster. Finally the state of relations with Saxony, especially in respect to the succession in Poland, formed an additional point of contact, friendly or unfriendly, as the attitude of the two powers, and the course of events, might determine.

August of Saxony had repaid the services of the two imperial courts, in forcibly seating him on the
Poland.
 throne of Poland, by a fairly uniform compliance with their policy and desires. But he had not succeeded in inducing the republic itself to accept the same yoke of dependence. On the contrary, his requests were denied, his advice was ridiculed, his authority despised; faction contended against faction; diet after diet assembled, tried in vain to pass necessary laws, and ended in disorder.⁴ In all this confusion there was, however, some method. To oppose August was to assert the independence of the

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. passim.

² Frederic to Knyphausen, 2 August, 1755.

³ Knyphausen, 20 July, 1755. *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 231.

⁴ Cf. Rulhière, *Histoire de l'anarchie de Pologne*, Paris, 1819, i. 186 et seq.

republic, and to obstruct the plans of the two imperial courts ; for they had benevolently included Poland in the treaty of 1746 as one of the principalities to be protected against the evil designs of the king of Prussia.¹ But Frederic showed no disposition to attack the republic, and that pretext for intervention failed. But another pretext was found, at least for diplomatic intervention, in the belief or assumed belief that August III. was nearing his end ; for his death would create a vacancy, which it would be desirable to fill with the least confusion and the least delay. August himself had no doubts about the proper candidate to meet the crisis. The Polish crown ought to descend to another member of his own family ; and toward that end he directed all the resources of Saxon diplomacy. But Russia thought differently. The events of the past had shown the inability of the house of Saxony to make the republic a mere tool of the Russo-Austrian alliance, and some more effective instrument had to be found. Rumor had it that Elizabeth was willing to propose and support prince Charles of Lorraine, the emperor's brother, when the throne should become vacant.² This was, however, but a passing episode. The real policy of the Russian court was to secure the election of a representative piast, who would have a considerable following among the Poles themselves, and yet be a willing tool in the hands of his patron. Such a candidate was to be found only in the faction of the Czartoryskis. But as this party were nominal supporters of August and his policy, the plan to elevate one of their number to the throne would have been defeated by prematurely revealing it. Until everything was ripe for a change of measures it was necessary, while supporting the Czartoryskis against all rival groups, to keep the Saxons in due submission by adroitly encouraging their hopes for the future. This line of conduct had the hearty

¹ In the fourth of the secret articles.

² Droysen, V. iv. 314 et seq.

support of England. Sir Hanbury Williams, who was accredited to August the king as well as to August the elector, spent much time at Warsaw laboring in its behalf. By intrigues with the Czartoryskis, by the liberal use of money, and by the aid of his lively eloquence, he hoped to bring the cabinets both of Dresden and of Warsaw more completely under the sway of the Anglo-Russian combination, to procure for the Russian troops, when their aid should be needed, the right of passage through Poland, and thus effectually to check the rival plans of France.

These plans were represented at Warsaw by count Broglie, younger son of the old marshal. Sent in 1752 as envoy to the republic, with general ^{Count Broglie.} instructions from the French ministry of foreign affairs, he was secretly directed by Louis to keep in correspondence with prince Conti, and to conform strictly to his suggestions.¹ These proved to be different from, and in many points contrary to, his official orders. The ministry instructed the envoy to use his best efforts to keep August out of the alliance of the two empires, but not to commit himself to any candidate for the succession in Poland. The secret policy enjoined upon him was, on the contrary, to build up a party among the nobles and in the diet favorable to prince Conti himself, a member of the house of Condé, and thus a kinsman of Louis. Such was the mission of the count de Broglie. A young man, bred to the profession of arms and wholly inexperienced in diplomacy, was sent forth with two conflicting sets of instructions, one secret, one official, and charged to obey the first without seeming to depart from the second. But the double rôle could not, it is evident, long be sustained. The ambassador himself describes his embarrassment in letters which are piquant, and yet not without pathos.² Hence,

¹ Broglie, *Le Secret du roi*, i. 33 et seq.; Boutaric, *Correspondance secrète de Louis XV.*, i. 195.

² Broglie, *Secret du roi*, i. 64 et seq.

in spite of the skill with which he conducted himself, the measures necessarily taken in support of his secret mission went so far beyond any required by his official orders that the suspicions of Saint-Contest were early aroused, and the rival courts nearly unmasked his real design. Count Brühl and Hanbury Williams discussed, as early as July, 1753, the purpose of France to put forward the prince of Conti. The English envoy even reported to his government that the support of Prussia had been gained by the promise of the district of Polish Preussen, to be ceded as soon as the French candidate should be seated on the throne.¹

This charge finds no support in the correspondence of Frederic. It does not positively appear that he understood the secret mission with which Broglie was entrusted; for his coöperation, which was warm and hearty, evidently had in view only the ostensible ends pursued by the ambassador, that is, the defeat of the efforts to bring Saxony into the Austro-Russian camp, and the organization of means to prevent an armed interference in the affairs of Poland.² He showed impatience indeed at what he considered the want of energy, and the tardy measures of the French government. He wrote urgent appeals to Louis, with long essays upon the critical state of affairs, essays which the voluptuary of Versailles doubtless found overdrawn, tedious, and ascribable only to the errors of a diseased imagination.³ He insisted that France should save Poland and the common cause by turning the Turks loose upon the imperial alliance.⁴ But for the

¹ Williams' report, 15 July, 1753, already mentioned; report of the Prussian legation at Dresden, 21 July, 1753, *Polit. Corresp.*, x. 28.

² Vide *Polit. Corresp.*, ix., x. passim; Droysen, V. iv. 324.

³ Frederic to Louis XV., 9 October, 18 December, 1752. D'Argenson, in his *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 96, describes his efforts, when he was minister, to get Louis to answer Frederic's frequent epistles.

⁴ Frederic to Louis, ubi supra.

charge that Frederic had demanded his price, and received it, in the promised cession of Polish territory, no evidence whatever appears. He himself ascribed it to the malice of Brühl, and denounced it in the most vigorous language.¹

Count Broglie continued meantime to follow the course laid down in his secret instructions, without, however, gaining much ground for prince Conti. But with those objects of his mission, which had the authorization of both sets of superiors, he made considerable progress. The rupture of the diet of Grodno in 1754 was regarded as a brilliant diplomatic triumph for the young envoy; a strong party was formed among the Polish noblesse hostile to the Czartoryskis; and August himself, weary of their dictation, seemed disposed to throw himself and his fortunes into the arms of France.² The ministry of Versailles seized this opportunity to urge the revival of the former intimacy. Their own subsidy treaty of 1746 with Saxony had expired in 1749; and the rival treaty of 1751, negotiated by the maritime powers, which secured, in return for liberal subsidies, the vote of August for the archduke Joseph, would terminate at the end of the year 1755. With full knowledge of this fact, the French ministry undertook to substitute a new treaty of their own for that of the maritime powers. The influence which Broglie's skilful tactics had won for France at Dresden seemed to make such a scheme feasible; and there were even hopes for a time that the efforts of French diplomacy would completely detach Saxony from the alliance of the two imperial courts.³

The relations between the court of Vienna and the court of Berlin have already been indirectly described in the foregoing pages. Little remains,

French
policy at
Dresden.

Berlin and
Vienna.

¹ Frederic to Maltzahn, 20 April, to Plessman, 27 July, 1753.

² Rulhière, i. 223.

³ Vitzthum, *Geheimnisse des sächsischen Cabinets*, Stuttgart, 1866, i. 247 et seq.; P. F. Stühr, *Forschungen und Erläuterungen über Hauptpunkte des Siebenjährigen Krieges*, Hamburg, 1842, Theil I. p. 22,

therefore, to add. Toward the end of the year 1750, count Podewils was recalled from the Austrian capital, and Klinggræffen was appointed to succeed him. But for instructions he was simply referred to those which had been furnished his predecessor, four years before.¹ The nature, or the temper, of the diplomatic intercourse between the two capitals may also be inferred from the character of the relations and the state of feeling between the respective rulers. Maria Theresa, a proud, sensitive, and ambitious woman, convinced of the rectitude of her own conduct, and cherishing the memory of a great wrong, looked upon the king of Prussia as a crowned highwayman, a scoffer at religion and morality, a bold, bad, unscrupulous man. Frederic, watchful, eager, and suspicious, peremptory in manner, impatient in debate, quick to take offence, had long believed that another war would be undertaken for the recovery of Silesia, and then had learned from the purchased treasures of foreign archives that preparations were making to begin it. Between two such monarchs, separated by such issues, frankness and cordiality in diplomatic relations were of course impossible. Even the ordinary and formal rules of courtesy were difficult to observe. The great shadow of an inevitable and not distant conflict hung over, darkened, and embarrassed all questions, important or unimportant, that came up for settlement. Frederic's opposition to the election of a king of the Romans was known and resented at Vienna. The guaranty by the Empire of the Prussian title to Silesia, though obtained in 1751, was only obtained after a long and irritating controversy. Much difficulty was found in adjusting the commercial relations of Silesia, and apportioning its debt. These and many others questions that arose, some of them exceedingly trivial, maintained a constant tension between the two courts ; and no serious efforts were made by either to put affairs on a better footing. When Kaunitz became

¹ *Supra*, p. 62.

chancellor and first minister of the empress-queen, his character was a guaranty that the attitude of Austria toward Prussia would suffer from no loss of energy under his administration. Yet as his energy never developed into rashness, but was kept in strict subordination to a cool and calculating reason, he guided the policy of his mistress during the period of preparation with a combination of patience, foresight, self-control, of wise firmness and subtle dexterity, which soon taught Frederic that he had at last found a dangerous adversary.¹

¹ "Le comte Kaunitz . . . si frivole dans ses goûts et si profond dans les affaires." *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iv. 17.

CHAPTER VII.

PRUSSIA AND GERMANY.

THE power of Frederic to meet the schemes of Kaunitz would be affected in some measure by the state of his relations to the lesser princes of the Empire. It is true that these princes were seldom united on any line of policy, and that neither Austria nor Prussia was likely to have their collective support, whether in war or in peace, in internal or in external affairs. But they all had some moral and some material weight, which made it an object for each of the two great rival powers to gain as many of them as possible. Frederic had tried to shake the authority of the Hapsburgs by the aid of an emperor from another house, and failed. In a political sense, the reign of Charles VII. was almost an interregnum. Maria Theresa haughtily denied the legality of the election; treated the poor Bavarian prince as a guilty usurper; refused to surrender the archives of the Empire; and when in 1745 her husband was carried triumphantly to the imperial throne, felt that in Germany at least her position was secure. Nor was Frederic blind to the significance of this victory. He saw that for a time it was hopeless to attempt to organize the Empire against the house of Austria, or to do more than obstruct such schemes as needed a practical unanimity of votes. The election of a king of the Romans was one of these, and this he was able to defeat. But in his opposition he had the aid of France, and through her of the elector-palatine; and what would be

the probable attitude of this prince, as well as others along the Rhine, if France and Austria should join hands as allies against the house of Brandenburg? For nearly a century the electors of Bavaria had been enemies of the Austrian crown; had opposed it in the field and in the cabinet; had fought its armies in every part of Germany; had welcomed the money of France and the alliance of Prussia; had challenged the inheritance of Maria Theresa; and had successfully contested the imperial throne. Yet to-day the court of Vienna had no more faithful servant than the young heir of Charles the Seventh. A dozen years before, Saxony was a member of the league which planned the partition of the Hapsburg estates, and for a time took an active part in the war which ensued. But now the city of Dresden was the sympathetic centre of the boldest schemes of Austrian diplomacy; and August III., trusted beyond almost any other prince of the Empire, repaid the confidence by the most complete servility. In short, the structure so carefully built up by Frederic and Belleisle had entirely disappeared. The Hapsburg supremacy was again established in the Empire, and the failure of such an ambitious effort to overthrow it seemed likely to prove an effective lesson for many years to come. Was it not possible that, if the balance of power in Germany should be thus destroyed by the predominance of one great state, the ancient constitution itself would in time be subverted, and the loose confederation, in which the several members still enjoyed a certain kind of independence, give way to a more compact, more highly centralized system, in which the securities for local rights would have little force or vigor?

A process somewhat like this has taken place in our own day, though with a significant change in one of the principal factors. Readers of modern his-<sup>Centraliza-
tion.</sup> tory are aware that a quarter of a century ago the politicians described the movement for German unity under

Prussian auspices by different terms, according to the standpoint from which they viewed it. One class declared that it meant the dissolution of Prussia in Germany; another said it was the dissolution of Germany in Prussia; and the cause was favored or opposed for one or the other of these reasons. But in the time of Frederic there was less doubt about the nature of the threatened process. Nobody pretended that the great Austrian monarchy was likely or willing to sink its own identity in that of the Empire; for such a result suited neither the aims of the court of Vienna, nor the prevailing habits of thought, nor the conditions of the age. It was rather the opposite process which was feared. The danger was that the house of Hapsburg, once more restored to the imperial throne, with all organized opposition cowed, with several lately disaffected princes suing for favor, would resume more boldly and more confidently the work of subverting local independence, of making the federal principle a garb for schemes of aggression, and of emasculating the imperial system in order the more effectually to control it. Whatever the conscious purpose of Austrian statecraft, this was its undoubted tendency; and a king of Prussia could not regard it with unconcern. Frederic had a profound contempt for the Empire as a political system. In private he was never weary of ridiculing its decrepitude, its antiquated forms, its vain and foolish splendor, its pedantry, its tedious and exasperating procedure; the solemn gravity of its officials, whom no sense of the ludicrous disturbed; its law courts, with their endless pleadings and counter-pleadings, their hair-splitting judgments, their musty volumes of sacred records; the diet, which sat as a legislature without making any laws; the aulic council, which only provided a harmless retreat for superannuated statesmen; the army without any soldiers; the treasury without any money; and all the pompous machinery by which the past was recalled only to make the present seem

poor, weak, and despicable.¹ But the Empire was still to be feared when it became, if only as a make-weight in politics, an instrument of the Austrian court. This explains why Frederic encouraged the unwise ambition of Charles Albert of Bavaria, and always insisted strongly on the independence of Germany. It explains why he saw with such concern the growing subservience of all the imperial organs to the court of Vienna. For he was not sure of having in the next crisis even the neutrality of the Empire; and it was possible that Maria Theresa would succeed in bringing such force and such prestige, as its support could give, entirely into her service.

In default, then, of the Empire itself as a system, there remained to Frederic only the hope of creating a partial schism by enticing some of the separate The lesser states of Germany. princes into his own camp. But even in this direction the outlook was not encouraging. In his treatment of his weaker neighbors Frederic had been at times unwisely arrogant, at times unwisely patronizing; and neither policy was of the kind which makes friends. From Bavaria and Saxony he had no aid to expect. He was involved in an ugly quarrel with the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin over the right claimed by his officers to levy recruits in the territory of that state; and the court of Vienna eagerly seized so good an occasion for applying the discipline of the Empire to its unruly member. Though the dispute was compromised, it left bitter memories behind. The notorious case of the countess Bentinck was more trivial in its nature, but was industriously used to create prejudice against Prussia. She laid claim to certain estates in northwestern Germany, and the judges decided against her, whereupon Frederic, as a director of the circle of Westphalia, at once sent troops to execute the judgment, before the king of Denmark, whom the emperor had selected to conduct the affair, could interfere. The

¹ Vide *Œuvres de Frédéric*, i. 28, 29.

countess carried her griefs to every court in Germany. The emperor protested against Frederic's arbitrary course ; and a widespread scandal, with a permanent fund of irritation, was naturally caused. Even with the little principality of Hesse-Cassel there were frictions. The heir apparent went over to the Roman Catholic Church, to the great delight of the Austrian court ; and there was some alarm about the eventual fate of the Protestant population, until England and Prussia compelled the apostate to sign a promise that his own change of religion should carry no prejudice to the rights of the reformed establishment. But this act, which the diet confirmed, was bitterly resented by the more bigoted Catholic princes. Their envoys at Regensburg appealed to the emperor to annul it, and even the pope came forward with a protest.¹ It seemed at this time, reflects Frederic, "as if a spirit of agitation was abroad, sowing the seeds of discord among all the powers of Europe."²

The natural allies of Prussia were the Protestant states of northern Germany. But the foreign connections of the two most important of these made it impossible for them to observe a purely German policy, or even to maintain any independent policy whatever. The elector of Saxony was, as king of Poland, little more than a vassal of Russia.³ The elector of Hanover was king of England. At Dresden and at Hanover there was indeed a party, or a faction, which found such relations irksome, and used every effort, if not to destroy them entirely, at least to assert the authority of German ties and German interests. This led to rival efforts, charges, and complaints at Warsaw and London ; so that at times it was difficult to know where the real balance of power lay. But the one certain

¹ Droysen, V. iv. 444.

² *Œuvres*, iv. 23.

³ Even the Catholicism of the palace was due to the Polish connection, for the population was still Protestant.

thing was that a conflict of aims raged at the capitals of the two leading neighbors of Prussia. Even if Frederic had not believed, as he did, that both were unfriendly to him, it would still have been unsafe to count on them for a cordial and undivided support of any scheme merely because it had a strong German, or a strong Protestant, tincture.

If Hanover and Saxony thus failed, what dependence could be placed on the multitude of still smaller states which completed the Protestant column? Some of these also had complicated foreign ties, as Brunswick with England and West Pomerania with Sweden, which involved a certain loss of freedom of action; and all alike wanted the conditions of useful allies. Here political energy was sacrificed to the passion for fine buildings or costly paintings, for parks resembling that of Windsor, or gardens in imitation of Versailles. There the people were taxed to support French players and dancers on a scale which was unknown at Berlin. Princes who could not pay their judges, and starved their school-teachers, had the reigning beauties of Europe to grace their harems. Those who kept troops, kept them only to be hired out as mercenaries to the power which could pay the most. And even in those states where there was no court to waste the substance and corrupt the morals of the people, in the free cities of the coast, all resolute German sentiment was suppressed by the fierce rivalries of trade, and the cosmopolitan spirit of seaport towns. This was bad material from which to construct a bulwark against the rising tide of Austrian and Catholic aggression. It would have been difficult to rouse it from its ledgers and counting-rooms, its pictures and parks and mistresses, even if the king of Prussia had been the ideal representative of German nationality, and the devout champion of German Protestantism. But in fact he was neither the one nor the other.

Those who are anxious to vindicate Frederic the Teuton,

even at the cost of Frederic the author, may find it easy to say, for instance, that the king's verses needed correction because French was a foreign language, which it was impossible for him to write with the idiomatic correctness of a native. But such a theory does not square with the facts. Frederic's early training, his youthful associations, and his original literary impressions were all those of a Frenchman rather than a German ; so that it is not incorrect to say that the language of Pascal, and not that of Luther, was naturally his own. It is true that his orthography was not quite up to the standard of the French academy. But he spelled French nearly as well as Maria Theresa spelled German, and he lived in an age when strict accuracy in this regard was not required of educated men : the printer and proof-reader improved the manuscript even of Voltaire. He often tripped in his grammar, and wrote sentences which Maupertuis bluntly declared had no meaning. Yet Louis the Fifteenth would have been a sorry critic of Frederic's style. In short, the king's faults were not those of a person vainly using an alien tongue, but those of a man of affairs whose education had not been thorough, who wanted the highest form of literary gifts, and whose taste for literature led him to undertake projects which were beyond his own unaided powers. He wrote French, as Marlborough wrote English, fluently, tersely, and intelligently, yet without the grace of a genuine artist, or the labored precision of a pedagogue.

By ignoring this consideration, not a few biographers of Frederic have drawn conclusions in which logic is sacrificed to national pride. A slip in spelling or in grammar is evidence for them that his French was only an acquired tongue ; and, by an easy advance from this first discovery, they ascribe all his vices to the training which he received at the hands of Huguenot refugees, and all his virtues to the sturdy German ele-

The French
of Frederic.

Race and
language.

ment which he inherited from his ancestors. Accordingly, while his cynicism, irreverence, and duplicity are all French, his thrift, his love for order, and his devotion to duty are German. But this distinction is more ingenious than solid. The blood of Frederic was by no means unmixed. His parents had as a common ancestor a princess whose father was English and whose mother was a Dane. The wife of the elector Frederic William was Louisa of Holland. Her paternal grandmother was a Coligny of France. Thus it appears, without going farther back, that the blood of several European races flowed in Frederic's veins, and that any theories based on the supposed purity of his German descent may easily mislead. His case is an illustration of the truth that in monarchies the head of the state is likely to have less of the national blood, and, so far as blood determines character, less of the national character, than the meanest of his subjects. For the descent of personal or race characteristics is not governed by the Salic law.

It is said, however, that Frederic must be regarded as a typical German because he had all the better qualities which distinguish the Germans from other peoples, and especially from the French. But this view seems also to overlook certain notorious facts of history. No one can deny that the Germans as a race are thrifty and industrious, or that their sense of duty is strong. But these qualities were not wanting to the French of the middle and lower classes, even in the time of Frederic. It was not the vices of the people of France, but the dulness and weakness of Louis himself, the profligacy of his court, and the corruption of his civil service, which by contrast threw such a lustre over the frugal, orderly, and efficient government at Berlin. These virtues had indeed also characterized the Prussian administration under Frederic William the First. The grandfather of Frederic was, however, distinctly inferior to Louis XIV.,

not only in the higher qualities of statesmanship, but even in fidelity to the ordinary duties of the kingly office. And it is manifestly audacious to describe Frederic as the type of ruler produced by German blood and education, in an age which counted among its heroes such German princes as George II. of England, August III. of Saxony, and Charles Albert of Bavaria.

The lessons so freely drawn from Frederic's life, though easily pardoned to the spirit of patriotism, thus
Inferences. appear, when strictly examined, not justified by the facts of his birth, his training, or his personal characteristics. Yet this view only enhances the merits of the man himself, and the splendor of his career. His achievements as a statesman and warrior would have given him a just title to greatness even if he had been a genuine German, and as such had had all the advantage which a ruler derives from knowledge of his people, and sympathy with their character. Instead of this, Frederic was alienated from his subjects by his tastes, by his language, by his tone of mind and methods of thought, by his views upon society, religion, moral conduct, and other momentous concerns of human life. While the Prussians were deeply pious, he was a sceptic and a scoffer. They were grave, slow, ponderous, and solemn; he was versatile, quick, ingenious. They had strong affections, which they expressed without reserve; he was a cynic, with a firm control of his emotions. They bore hardships and privations, censure and reproof, with a docile patience which in his heart he despised, useful as he found it to his system of government. For he himself was proud, sensitive, jealous of his honor, and quick to take offence. Thus contrasts and antipathies robbed the king and his people of much of the strength which in all governments comes from sympathy of tastes, and harmony of aims, between the rulers and the ruled. Nothing but Frederic's extraordinary talents, the fear inspired by the firmness of his rule, and the confi-

dence taught by his repeated triumphs, made it possible for him to raise the Prussians to such heights of achievement, or even to hold them so compactly together for forty-six years.

It is true that Frederic often spoke contemptuously of the French, and had little respect for them as a race. He called them vain, shallow, fickle, and untrustworthy. If these were their qualities, they were likely to be more strongly impressed by the splendor of royalty than by its real merits, and to be unwelcome friends for a Hohenzollern king. Yet the characteristics which made Jordan, Chasot, Darget, D'Argens, and many others, not excepting Voltaire himself, such favored guests at Sans Souci, were largely those of the French nation. Wit, grace, sprightliness, tact, temerity, — these were the gifts which made their possessors agreeable companions to Frederic. Great reputation in science or letters gave the next title to favor; and the plainer qualities of sincerity, rectitude, conscientiousness, gravity of mind, and sobriety of life, came last in the order of estimation.

While Frederic was thus talking, writing, and living French, the slower currents of German thought and production flowed by him unperceived. ^{A sinister rumor.} A rumor which agitated the literary circles of Berlin in 1749 ascribed to him the critical remark that Canitz was the first and the last of German poets.¹ Canitz was a mechanical versifier of the court of Frederic I. If to this estimate of his rank be added the further opinion, also a part of the same rumor, that in their language the Germans yet retained one feature of their original barbarism, it becomes clear that the king of Prussia was not sanguine about the literature of his own country.

In effect, however, the king had already written an opinion not greatly different in the first part of his histori-

¹ Heinrich Prohle, *Friedrich der Grosse und die deutsche Literatur*, Berlin, 1878, p. 40.

cal works. "This age produced," he says, speaking of the reigns of his immediate predecessors, "no good historian. Teissier was commissioned to write the history of Brandenburg, and made a panegyric. Pufendorf wrote the life of Frederic William, and, in order to omit nothing, recorded the names of his clerks of department, and his valets de chambre. Our authors have always failed, it seems to me, in distinguishing things essential from things unessential, in making facts transparent, and in writing a simple, concise style, free from epithets, inversions, and pedantry. But in the midst of this dearth of good works in prose, Brandenburg had one excellent poet in the person of Canitz. He translated happily certain epistles of Boileau; he wrote imitations of Horace, and a few works which were entirely original. He is the Pope of Germany, the most elegant, most correct, and least diffuse poet, who has made verses in our language. For in Germany pedantry extends even to the bards; the speech of the gods is prostituted in the mouth of some rector of an obscure college, or some dissolute student; and men of worth are too proud, when not too indolent, to play the lyre of Horace, or sound the bugle of Virgil. But Canitz, though of noble birth, saw no degradation in the gift of song, and cultivated it with success."¹

In the survey of the state of Europe, which forms the introductory chapter of the history of the Silesian wars, and which was also written, though not published, at this time, Frederic returned to the subject, and reached a result not more flattering to his own country. Everywhere except in Germany he found literature, and all the polite arts, in a high degree of prosperity. England excelled in grave works of moral and political philosophy. The French rivalled the classical writers of antiquity in everything which concerned taste, grace, and

Frederic on
German
poets.

On German
civilization.

¹ *Œuvres de Frederic*, i. 231, 232.

elegance. Boileau could compare himself to Juvenal or Horace; the eloquence of Bossuet approached that of Demosthenes; Fléchier was the Cicero of Paris; and if France had no Thucydides, she had the "Discours sur l'histoire universelle" of Bossuet, the "Révolutions romaines" of the abbe de Vertot, the "Décadence de l'empire romain"¹ of Montesquieu, and a multitude of other works in history or poetry, of utility or pleasure. But Germany was far behind the other civilized nations of Europe in the cultivation of the mind, and the development of taste.²

This time, too, Frederic, not satisfied with stating the fact, attempts also to explain it, by showing the special cause which, in each of the other three leading countries, had given such an impulse to the course of literary progress. In Italy it was the Renaissance and the Medicis; in France, the patronage of Richelieu, Mazarin, and Louis XIV.; in England, the freedom of the press, the practice of parliamentary life, the public rivalry of parties. But, such being the case in these countries, what were the opposite causes which worked so different a result in the great region between the Rhine and the Vistula? This question Frederic proceeds to answer.

The progress of the arts in Germany, he says, "was retarded by the wars which raged from the time of Charles the Fifth to the contest over the succession in Spain. The people were degraded, and the princes poor. The first problem was to obtain food by cultivating the soil; the next, to found manufactories for the simplest products; and these elementary cares long made it difficult for the nation to emerge from its early barbarism. In Germany, too, the arts had no great centres about which to rally, such as Rome and Florence in Italy, Paris in France, and London in England. The universities had learned professors, but they were pedants and dogmatists; and nobody

¹ Sic.

² *Œuvres de Frédéric*, ii. 37.

heard their lectures. There were only two men who were distinguished for their genius, and were an honor to their nation; these were Leibnitz and Thomasius. . . . The German scholars were mechanics; the French, artists; and this explains why French works circulated everywhere, why the French language superseded the Latin to such an extent that a person who knows it can now travel through Europe without an interpreter. The use of French was an injury to the national tongue, which, remaining confined to the common people, could not acquire that refinement which is gained only in good society. The principal defect of German is its excessive vocabulary; it needs to be simplified, and, by softening some of its words, to be made more musical. The nobles studied only public law, and, without taste for polite literature, returned from the universities full of disgust with the pedants who had instructed them. The theologians, their mentors, were the sons of cobblers and tailors. The Germans had plays, but they were coarse and indecent, and were acted by vulgar buffoons, who made the modest blush. Our poverty made us resort to the abundance of France, and at most of our courts French troupes rendered the plays of Molière and Racine.”¹

Such was Frederic’s view of the state of German literature in the decades just before his own accession, and of the causes which produced it. Though
 Language and literature. neither very original nor very striking, it is at least of interest as showing his attitude, and that, too, not alone as a prince but also as an author, toward the hopes and prospects of that literature in his own time. Here, too, he found little to encourage him, for in poetry and criticism Gottsched was still the most prominent of Germans. But Gottsched was not a man of deep poetical feeling, or of original literary methods. A strenuous defender of the German language, he always remained an imitator

¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, ii. 36–39.

of French style, two parts which Frederic must have found it difficult to reconcile. For he nearly or quite missed the close organic connection between the speech and the life of a people. Using French himself almost as a mother tongue, familiar only with French literature, and choosing Frenchmen almost exclusively for his social companions, he too easily overlooked the fact that his subjects had not all enjoyed the same facilities; that for them foreign dialects were luxuries rather than staples of life; and that even when they acquired the greatest technical accuracy in the use of French or Italian, they would still want, except in rare individual cases, the perfect flexibility of style, and the sympathetic spiritual feeling, without which great productions in literature are impossible. He looked upon language as only a vehicle for the conveyance of ideas, and could ascribe to nothing except habit the fact that any German should prefer his own clumsy dray to the light, swift, and graceful chariot of the French. This was especially hard to understand in the case of a man like Gottsched, who in every other respect observed faithfully the rules of the road as laid down by the critics of Paris.

At Berlin, however, Gottsched's supremacy was not blindly accepted by the German men of letters. Berlin poets. Mylius was indeed his ardent disciple, but Sulzer defended not less warmly the doctrines of Bodmer and the Swiss critics; while between these two extremes, and ranging from the one to the other, stood that group of poets who are called sometimes the school of Halle, from the place of their origin, and sometimes the school of Berlin, from the place whither most of them eventually drifted. It contained several men whose names are now known only to the antiquary. But it also numbered among its members poets of no mean order of ability, whose works yet have a recognized value in the history of German literature. Ramler's odes were marked by a

high degree of artistic finish ; and his acknowledged skill in the use of German verse caused him often to be consulted by youthful aspirants for poetical fame. Gleim was the author of some stirring lyrics, which the Prussian soldiers sang as they marched to victory on the field of battle. Yet none of these men were able wholly to shake off the yoke of French authority. The greater part of them frankly accepted the canons of Batteux, and the most daring insubordination was that which simply went one degree farther back, and took up the earlier models of Greece. With those who reached this point of boldness, Anacreon was the favorite, and anacreontic odes were abundant at Berlin. The school was, however, thoroughly German in its aims and aspirations. Notwithstanding Frederic's contemptuous neglect of the language and literature of his country, the muse of Ramler, Lange, Pyra, Kleist, and Gleim patriotically sang the exploits of the Prussian hero, and brought his virtues nearer to his own people, in the only language which they were able to comprehend.

The relations between these ardent young bards were marked by a warmth and sincerity as pure as can be found anywhere in the records of literature. In the letters which they exchanged, they open their hearts without reserve. Their perplexities are stated, their doubts explained, their plans described, in the most fraternal spirit of confidence ; the latest issues from the press are keenly discussed ; new metres are tried, and accepted or condemned ; and in the success of any one of the friends the others take a hearty, unenvi-ous delight. In short, the little society seemed to have reached, in the cultivation of letters, only the primitive stage of ingenuous pastoral simplicity. It represented, indeed, the new birth of German poetry, but a poetry creeping on all-fours, instead of marching proudly forward in the full strength of a vigorous and independent

Their aims
and
methods.

manhood. It shrank modestly from contact with the great French masters whom Frederic distinguished by his hospitality or his correspondence. It was cautious, prudent, unconscious of its own mission, and not at all revolutionary in its aims or its methods. Yet the poets of the Berlin school rendered not the less a distinct service in the emancipation of German literature. They enforced respect for the language of Luther. Filled with a healthy and noble patriotism, they opposed a strong barrier to the march of that cosmopolitanism which, under the patronage of the court of Prussia, was threatening the very foundations of German nationality, and thus they connected the cause of literary with that of political independence. And even the conservatism of their methods was an advantage. It conciliated opinion; reassured the timid. It prevented an abrupt and violent revolt, which would have been followed by an inevitable reaction; and thus aided the national muse slowly and safely to escape from the artificial and pedantic rules of the prevailing system to the greater freedom of a fresh, original, creative literature. The passage of the national taste over the vast interval, which in letters separates Gottsched from Goethe, was thus really made easier by these humble and now neglected bards.

For a time indeed this work was embarrassed by a premature outbreak or revolt, such as has checked many a useful reform. In 1749 appeared the ^{Klopstock.} first cantos of Klopstock's "Messiah." Hailed with rapturous delight by Bodmer as the herald of a new era in literature, the Leipsic school, with Gottsched at its head, eagerly seized the advantage, so freely offered by its artistic crudeness and wild irregularities, to reassert the authority of the recognized rules of style. The situation was critical. The issue was drawn in such a way that all friends of a pure, correct, and finished literature seemed compelled to reject the "Messiah," and espouse the side of Gottsched.

At this point Lessing stepped into the arena. He was now making his first visit to Berlin, having Lessing in Berlin. gone thither toward the end of the year 1748, in search of a chance to make a living by his pen. His reputation was not yet established. To a few friends, Mylius among the number, he was known as a young man of pleasing social manners, of fine scholarship, of a firm intellectual integrity, and of gifts which promised a useful career in letters. Under the encouragement of Mylius, with whom he lived, he tried his pen in many directions. He wrote plays, which, however, owing to the want of a German theatre, could not be produced in Berlin. He coöperated with Mylius in founding a periodical organ for the cultivation of German literature, or more especially the literature of the stage;¹ and the critical articles contributed by him early called attention to his fitness for a branch of letters in which he afterwards won such renown. But Mylius having rashly asserted in one number that no good Italian play had appeared on the stage, Lessing at once withdrew from the enterprise, and it soon afterwards came to an end.² He next became literary editor of the leading German journal of the capital.³ He even descended to the drudgery of translations, mainly from the French. For he had not yet thrown off the authority of Paris, and regarded Voltaire with an admiration which only in later years gave way to a feeling of profound aversion. He even came into somewhat close personal relations with the great Frenchman. Voltaire employed him, at a rate of compensation which was probably not munificent, to turn some of his pleadings in the

¹ Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters.

² Lessing, by James Sime, Boston, 1877, vol. i. p. 83.

³ The "Privilegite Berlinische Zeitung für Staats- und Gelehrten-Sachen." It had lately passed into the hands of the bookseller and publisher Voss, who added the sub-title "Vossische Zeitung." It is by this secondary name that the paper, which still survives, is now commonly known.

Hirsch affair into German. But the young disciple met in the end one of those disasters which nearly always ended the friendships of Voltaire. He was thoughtless enough to carry away with him from Berlin part of a manuscript copy of the yet unpublished "*Siècle de Louis XIV.*," loaned to him by a secretary or amanuensis; and Voltaire's rage at the discovery passed all control. The secretary was at once dismissed. A fierce letter to Lessing, then at Wittenberg, charged him with the intention to issue a pirated edition of the work, and demanded the instant return of the manuscript. Lessing sent a caustic reply in Latin and vindicated his reputation for honesty. Not long afterwards, too, he had an opportunity to exult, if he were capable of such exultation, over the public disgrace inflicted by Frederic himself upon the author of "*Akakia*."

It was, however, before this rupture that Lessing published his critique of the "*Messiah*." His literary tastes were not yet fixed; he was feeling his way, as it were, toward the position which he afterwards reached, and from which he rendered such signal service to his country. Hence, in respect to the "*Messiah*," he came forward as a species of mediator between the un-^{Lessing and Klopstock.}reasoning enthusiasm of Bodmer and the dogmatic hostility of Gottsched. He fully appreciated the spirit which prompted Klopstock's revolt from the artificiality and lifeless formalism that characterized much of the current literature of Europe; his desire to introduce freshness, vigor, and energy; his demand for a thoroughly national school of writers. To that extent he welcomed the "*Messiah*" as a useful contribution to the reform of letters. But he could not admit that the value of a poem was to be measured by the greatness of its theme. He was not willing to condemn form because he condemned formalism, or to bow down before artlessness because he hated artificiality. Artlessness, or naïveté, in poetry asserted itself

at a later epoch successfully and usefully ; but Lessing was first of all a critical reformer, and his special mission was to vindicate the authority of art. He was the defender of law, not of lawlessness, in literature. Only, the art or the law which he represented was elastic, wholesome, vigorous ; gave considerable rein to aspiring freedom while checking the ardor of mere license ; and skillfully prepared the way for the new school of German literature.

In 1752 Lessing returned to Berlin for another brief
Second
Berlin visit. sojourn, which proved to be more fruitful than the first. He strengthened old friendships and formed several new ones, which for many years afforded him the greatest enjoyment. Mylius left Berlin, indeed, the next year, and died on a journey begun in the interests of science. But Lessing became more intimate with Ramler, and also made the acquaintance of Frederic Nicolai, a student as well as a patron of letters, and of the modest, amiable, accomplished Moses Mendelssohn. His intimacy with the latter was of the closest and most affectionate description. They took part as collaborators in the solution of a problem solemnly propounded by the academy at the instance of Frederic : to find or explain the relation between the philosophy of Pope and that of Leibnitz ; and they reached the conclusion, not at all acceptable to Maupertuis, that Pope had no system of philosophy whatever. Mendelssohn was a Jew ; and Lessing, who loved his friend and hated intolerance, attacked the current prejudice against Hebrews with all the weapons of literature. He was now so well known, too, that he could venture openly to challenge Gottsched and his adherents, which he did in a series of the most trenchant and unanswerable critiques. But he was still poor, and Berlin offered little encouragement for a German writer who felt that he had a mission in literature and yet was without other resources than his pen. In 1755 he removed

to Leipsic. At Leipsic there was a German theatre, and Lessing, who had just achieved some success with the play of "Miss Sara Sampson," was strongly attracted to a place where his dramatic efforts would be supported by Koch the manager and Brückner the actor.

Such were the obscure, modest, and laborious efforts of a few ardent workers to cultivate German letters in one of the two great capitals of the fatherland. From the Olympian heights of Potsdam they were unseen and unheard. What might have been the effect if Frederic had assumed an interest in the literature of his own country; if the patronage of the crown had been given, not to imported French favorites, but to the struggling authors of Prussia; if only a small part of the sums squandered as pensions and salaries on the D'Argens, Algarottis, and La Mettries had been used to keep the wolf from the door of Lessing, and others like Lessing, who in wretched garrets barely earned a living by the ill-requited and ill-appreciated labor of their pens, — this can now of course only be conjectured. It is possible that the infant cause was really served by the indifference of a king who, if he had interfered at all, would have interfered to rule, and probably to ruin.

This view is made to seem reasonable by the result of his experiments in architecture. The delight which he took in fine buildings, the plans which he formed for the improvement of the capital, and the many ambitious structures which arose during his reign, have already been described. He even asserted, modestly indeed, a certain degree of independence for the architecture of Germany, not excluding that of Berlin.¹ But such was his love of authority, which he aimed to use for the good of the state, and such his confidence in his own taste, which, though often good, was not infallible, that nearly all the architects whom he employed were

Frederic
and his
architects.

¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, ii. 40.

eventually driven into revolt, or were dismissed in disgrace. Knobelsdorf's fate overtook in succession Dieterichs, Baumann, and Gontard.¹ The favorite authorities were Italians, such as Panini, Piranesi, and Palladio. With their works spread out before him, the king formed his plans, sketched them not unskilfully in outline, and listened with impatience to the advice of his modest German experts.

It was probably not Frederic's fault that he was obliged to go abroad for systematic treatises on architecture. But the same excuse cannot be made for his neglect to give German artists a place in the gallery of paintings at Sans Souci; for the works of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Kranach had at least historical interest, and Holbein belonged, in race and name, to the wide Teutonic fatherland. Neither of these masters, nor any other German painter, was, however, represented in at least the earlier collections which Frederic made. Only seven French names appear. Dutch and Italian works were the most numerous; and when Frederic describes his desires to his correspondents, Darget, Algarotti, D'Argens, he mentions only such masters as Rubens, Vandyke, Correggio, and their compatriots of Antwerp and Amsterdam, of Florence and Venice; not one of the pioneers in German art, with whom the galleries of the Empire are now filled; not one of the humble neophytes who were plying the brush in Dresden, Munich, Vienna, and Berlin. He never sat even to Pesne, who was one of the best painters of the time, and to whose skill, employed against such disadvantages, the world still owes its best portraits of the king. The engraver Schmidt was discovered by Knobelsdorf at Paris, and brought back to Berlin only after the medals of the French academy had given him a European reputation.²

Even more striking seems Frederic's neglect of German

¹ Preuss, i. 267.

² Ibid., i. 277.

science, and German schools for the study of science. In view of his French training, associations, and tastes, and the low opinion which he had of the ^{Of German science.} æsthetic gifts of his countrymen, it is perhaps not strange that he felt the hopelessness of any efforts of his own to work a reformation on the side of art. But he could not have been ignorant of what the Germans had accomplished in science, both abstract and applied. Nay, he might have reasoned that the very qualities which unfitted his countrymen for art and letters would be highly useful in solving the graver problems of man and nature, of law, politics, and theology. Sobriety of mind, love of method, power of application, and intellectual integrity were traits which marked German scholars as a class. These alone could not indeed produce Newtons or Galileos; but they were gifts which a king anxious to encourage science among his own people would have recognized as favorable to his purpose. The universities had such men in numbers; brave, earnest, self-sacrificing workers; men of extensive learning, of profound minds, of an industry which never tired, of an honesty which could not be tempted. But, even if besides these virtues they had had the sacred gift of genius, they could hardly have thrown off the chains in which they were bound. To one set of fetters allusion is made by Frederic himself in the passage already cited. The professors were the victims of a false scholastic system, a system harsh, narrow, formal, which was built on pedantry, which frowned on originality and invention, which repressed talent, which kept men within a dull circle of routine, precedent, authority, and method. This state of things Frederic had a perfect right to despise and denounce.

Here, however, he rested. He made little or no effort to correct the evil which he deplored; to stimulate the cause of German science in Prussia; to draw out latent talent; to excite respect for the humble scholars of Halle

and Königsberg ; to relieve them from the daily struggle for bread, in order that they might have leisure for the silent meditations of the closet, or for study amid the phenomena of nature. On the contrary, he systematically neglected the higher education, even if he did not practically discourage it. The university of Halle was left throughout his reign on its original foundation of seven thousand thalers, and received only eighteen thousand in the form of special grants from the treasury. Frankfort on the Oder and Königsberg, the two remaining Protestant universities, received only twelve and seven thousand respectively. The narrow policy which restricted the chairs at Frankfort to members of the Calvinist confession was retained by Frederic as he found it.¹ The professors were poor, were despised by the students and insulted by the officers, were rarely admitted to the academy, and lived unnoticed by their king. He seemed to value them and their schools only as machines for making clerks, accountants, and privy-councillors. From that point of view he renewed the harsh edicts of his father, which forbade all candidates for the civil service to pursue their studies at any other than Prussian universities, and thus said in effect that the culture of the mind, the development of the reason, the production of scholars, was not his principal object.²

Even the little that Frederic did for the improvement of the common schools belongs to a later period of his reign, and consisted more of promise than of performance. But technical and professional education, as more suited to the strict division of the social groups, and to the work which was required of the

Primary and
technical
education.

¹ Preuss, iii. 110, 111 ; Stenzel, iv. 346, 347. See, however, Carl Schmidt's *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, 4th ed., Köthen, 1883, vol. iii. p. 602 et seq.

² Edict of 14 October, 1749. Mylius, *Corp. Const. March.* Cont. IV. p. 191.

people, seemed a worthier object of his favor. Hence he strengthened the military academies already in existence, and added others; founded a seminary for the training of young nobles in the virtues proper to their order; and supported Hecker in his scheme for a so-called practical school, the germ of what subsequently became an important part of the Prussian educational system.¹ Frederic wrote much upon education, and often in a true spirit of enlightenment and liberality. But his more important writings belong also to the later years of his reign, when, the position of his state being established in Europe, he felt that he could relax somewhat the severe tension in which he had hitherto held his people. In this period his first object was discipline of the most rigorous and practical kind.

Finally, the attitude of Frederic toward religion and the Christian sects, though in some respects liberal beyond the age, was hardly fitted to unite parties in his support. A German historian has written with much erudition and some ability against the charge that the king was an atheist.² Probably he has made out his case. But if Frederic had religion, it was not the religion of any recognized sect of Germans; his gods were not those of the north or the south, of Rome, or Geneva, or Wittenberg. Hence his beliefs brought him into no general sympathy with the great body of Christians, or into special contact with any sect. He offended the pious by the flippant and cynical tone in which he spoke of the most sacred doctrines of revealed religion. He was thus indeed no hypocrite. Unlike many contemporary rulers, he scorned to make outward compliance a mask for hideous

¹ Schmidt, *ubi supra*, p. 616; P. D. Fischer, *Friedrich der Grosse und die Volks-Erziehung*, Berlin, 1877, p. 29. The practical schools — Real-Schulen — neglect the classics, and hold the same relation to the higher technical schools as the gymnasia to the universities,

² Preuss, iii. 152 et seq.

practical irreligion ; did not sit impatiently through mass, and then fly to the arms of a mistress ; or hear long sermons with his mind full of Voltaire and Diderot. Though a sceptic, he was open and honest, and to that extent deserved respect. Where he failed was not in feigning acquiescence in beliefs which he despised, but in neglecting to show a decent charity towards those with whom such beliefs were vital issues of life and conduct. This was inexcusable, if only because it was impolitic. The great body of the German people were incapable of fine distinctions ; and in their eyes to attack superstition, or to lampoon the theologians, was to cast ridicule upon Christianity as a belief, — nay, upon religion itself.

It was, now, one of the ironies of the Prussian system
Treatment
of the clergy. that this king was in law the first bishop of the national church. He was the heir of those prerogatives which the electors of Brandenburg acquired with the Reformation, and which, subject only to the restraints of the treaty of Westphalia, they still exercised without dispute. But although these prerogatives were in the end political, and regarded the church as a mere corporation, subject like other corporations to the supreme authority of the state, the predecessors of Frederic were all men of avowed, and some of them of real piety, so that the relation was not in their case offensively irrational and absurd. They felt the necessity of supporting the church for its own sake, for the great truths of which it was the bearer, for the solace which it brought to the lowly, the afflicted, and the despondent. But nothing of this spirit could be expected of Frederic. He recognized Christianity as an institution, which satisfied certain cravings of unenlightened mankind ; as an edifice, which it was unwise, perhaps impossible, to overthrow ; as a force which, if well administered, could even be made to serve the cause of social discipline. And that was all. His imagination was not touched by the spiritual beauties of Christianity

which shone above all its practical faults and failures, by the heroic self-devotion which it had never failed to command, by its martyrs who had perished in the dungeon or at the stake. For him its history was the history of error, superstition, and intolerance. Pope and priest, monk and abbot, bishop and pastor, were confounded by his philosophy in one common anathema, and stigmatized even in his official orders by the same coarse terms of contempt.¹ He was eager to find flaws in the character, or scandals in the life, of the clergy. And while he held firmly to his authority over the ecclesiastical system, and refused the church that freedom which might have given it an independent life and vigor, he made no effort to endow it with the dignity, power, and prestige which would have followed a wise system of state patronage. The parish clergy stood on a level with the village school-masters. The lord of a manor ranked both alike with his cook or his butler; and the king showed little desire to revise this classification. In the multitude of edicts, decrees, and orders of laws special and laws general, by which the summus episcopus kept the ecclesiastical machine in action, and which throw light upon his almost passionate love of details, there is, at least during this period, no evidence of any sympathy with the national church as the repository of a great body of precious doctrines, or with the humble ministers who toiled bravely and patiently in its service. He denies the petition of certain officials who, being unable to attend worship regularly on Sundays, ask permission to take the communion privately on other days.² But he fines the pious and learned Franke at Halle twenty thalers, and calls him a Protestant Jesuit, for joining in a protest against a low company of comedians, who were corrupting the morals of the students.³

¹ See the examples collected by Büsching, *Character Fr. d. Zweiten*, p. 51 et seq.

² Mylius, *Corp. Const. March.* Cont. IV. p. 155.

³ Büsching, *ubi supra*, p. 57.

Frederic's maxims of toleration were honorable to his heart and his mind. Although he was the ruler of a Protestant state, and looked with distrust upon the papacy as an institution, he had no prejudice against Roman Catholics as such; encouraged them to found parishes and build churches in Prussia; took them freely into his service; and protected them in all their rights. He was neutral, he said, between Rome and Geneva. He even tolerated the Jesuits whom France expelled, and in Silesia he carefully preserved the balance of power between the rival sects. But this policy rested on indifference quite as much as upon conviction, and for that reason wanted the force as an example which it might otherwise have had. Neutrality or toleration was not at all what the sects desired. The age was not ripe for the benevolent doctrines set forth by Frederic, and their progress was slow toward popular acceptance. In his own kingdom he was able of course to maintain an outward peace between the sects. But the more favor he showed to Roman Catholics, the more the papacy demanded; supremacy, not equal rights, was its motto. Hence, in spite of civil compliments which were now and then exchanged between Rome and Berlin, the Holy See and the Roman Catholic party looked upon the king of Prussia with malevolent eyes, and intrigued on all sides to cross his plans. In his contests with Austria it was to the latter alone that the prayers and benedictions of the papacy were given. And for the same reason no Protestant sect had, as a sect, very strong motives for attachment to a king who simply treated all sects with an easy, contemptuous impartiality, and, though refusing to persecute, refused also to believe.

It may be said, then, in conclusion, that up to this time Frederic had not found any large place in the popular mind as a German prince, with a German patriotism and a German mission. His alliance with

Toleration.

The result.

France, his war upon Austria, the tongue which he spoke, the friends whom he kept, his neglect of German culture, his religious indifference, the hard stern character of his rule, his sneers and sarcasms, — these and other faults of policy and temper combined to raise up enemies about him, and to make him an object of distrust even with those who should have been his friends. Of Prussia and the Prussians he was sure. But it was hardly as a German prince that, in the crisis now drawing near, he could appeal to his neighbors for help.

CHAPTER VIII.

WESTMINSTER AND VERSAILLES.

As the prospect that the conflict with France would lead to war in Europe became clearer, the English ministers began to inquire anxiously into the resources for the defence of Hanover, which it was foreseen would receive the earliest blow. First of all, they addressed themselves naturally to the court of Vienna. Did the empress-queen regard herself as bound to assist her old ally, and what measures would she take to render such assistance effective? How many troops would she send into the Netherlands? What force would be furnished for the defence of the electorate?¹ But the replies to these questions, which were pressed upon the Austrian cabinet all through the spring of 1755, were evasive and unsatisfactory. The chief danger to Hanover was artfully assumed to be from the side of Prussia; and hence, it was said, the safest way to meet it was to keep the bulk of the Austrian forces near home, ready for use against Frederic, instead of sending large detachments to the distant field of the Netherlands. The meaning of this was clear. The Austrian court was willing to reconstruct the English alliance only in case it should be directed against Prussia as well as France, and thus give an opportunity for the reconquest of Silesia.²

In May the English parliament was hastily prorogued,

¹ Vide Coxe, *House of Austria*, iii. 355 et seq.

² Arneth, iv. 372, 373; Keith's dispatches in Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 287.

and the king went to Hanover for the summer. From there, on the first of June, lord Holdernessee informed the Austrian cabinet that England expected the empress-queen to send fifty or sixty thousand men to the Netherlands, as well as to resist by force any hostile demonstration by Prussia, and demanded a prompt and unequivocal answer.¹ It was given on the twenty-first of the month. After an extremely elaborate defence of the Austrian standpoint, in which the already familiar arguments were rehearsed, expanded, and emphasized, the communication closed with what may be regarded as an ultimatum. The empress-queen was willing to send ten thousand troops to reinforce those already stationed in the Netherlands. But they were offered only on condition that England herself would promise to supply a contingent of twenty thousand for coöperation with them, to obtain an adequate quota from Holland, and to bring the subsidy treaty with Russia to a speedy conclusion.² The wide discrepancy between these terms and the demands of Holdernessee raises the suspicion that Kaunitz was not a very eager negotiator.

Response of
Austria.

In the mean time England, partly out of deference to the wishes of Austria and partly out of regard for her own safety, again took up the negotiations with the court of St. Petersburg. Sir Hanbury Williams was sent thither in June to replace the aged and incompetent Guy Dickens, and entered fully into the spirit of his mission. From Warsaw he took with him count Poniatowski, a Polish nobleman of the Russian faction, a youth of singular grace and beauty of person, through whom he intended to win the princess Catherine, and thus obtain a favorable welcome in what was called the young court. He had full powers to nego-

Hanbury
Williams at
St. Peters-
burg.

¹ Arneth, iv. 375, 376 ; Coxe, *H. of A.*, iii. 359.

² A. Beer in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. xxvii. p. 303. Cf. Keith to Holdernessee, 19 June, 1755, apud Coxe, ubi supra.

tiate, and — scarcely less important in diplomacy — a heavy purse for Bestuschef and the others. But the empress herself was the worst obstacle to the speedy transaction of business. She spent the night at cards or with her lovers, and the day in bed. Sometimes she would hear nothing of public affairs for a week or a fortnight. Fierce as was her hatred of Frederic, it was only by the greatest efforts that Williams and Bestuschef could get her to follow the negotiations for a treaty aimed first of all at Prussia, and to give her assent, when needed, to the articles agreed to by her ministers. But Williams' own lively dislike of Frederic gave him a keen personal interest in the proposed alliance, and he labored early and late to complete it. The king of Prussia, it was hoped, would soon be held completely in check by the presence of sixty thousand Russians on his frontier.¹ At length, early in August, Williams announced that an agreement was probable on the main features of the treaty. Six weeks later, on the thirtieth of September, it was signed.

The treaty provided that the empress should assemble and maintain on the frontier of Livonia a force of fifty-five thousand troops to be supported at the expense of England. If England herself, or any ally of England, or the electorate of Hanover, should be attacked, these troops were to take the field on the requisition of his Britannic majesty. So long as they remained in the field, the annual subsidy was to be five hundred thousand pounds. Ratifications were to be exchanged within two months, or if possible sooner.²

Anglo-Russian
subsidy
treaty.

Shortly before this, a similar treaty for the loan of mer-

¹ Keith to Kaunitz apud Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 288.

² Wenck, iii. 75-83. The stipulation in regard to the maintenance of the Russian corps in time of peace was contained in the first of two separate and secret articles. The second provided for the reciprocal exchange of information, and mutual cooperation for the common interests.

cenaries, twelve thousand in number, had been concluded with the landgrave of Hesse.¹ Both treaties were parts of a single system of policy. But Treaty with Hesse. when they were laid before the cabinet, Legge, the chancellor of the exchequer, flatly refused to sign warrants on the treasury for the first payment until parliament should have given its authorization. This unexpected obstacle made it necessary to await the opening of the session.

The Austrian note meantime was left unanswered. The month of July passed, two weeks of August followed, and still the Vienna statesmen received English overtures in Berlin. no decision from England, and no hint that a decision might soon be expected. Count Colleredo, their ambassador at London, was in Hanover, and in frequent communication with Holdernessee: it would have been easy to give him satisfactory assurances, even if a formal reply had to be delayed. The inference was, therefore, that England found the Austrian terms unacceptable. It is now known, besides, that the English ministers had made overtures to Frederic for an arrangement by which Hanover should be neutralized, and the services of Austria for its defence be rendered unnecessary.

These overtures were made by Holdernessee through the reigning duke of Brunswick. Treaties connected him indeed with the opposite or Franco-Prussian party; but he was a kinsman of George the Second, and a possible successor to his title and crown, so that for these reasons, as well as from a regard to the safety Preliminary correspondence. of his own duchy, he was averse to a French occupation of Hanover. His wife was Frederic's sister, and the family interests made it perhaps seem more natural to have Prussia allied with England than with France. The

¹ Wenck, iii. 67-75. Horace Walpole, *Geo. II.*, vol. ii. p. 35, wrote bitterly enough that "a factory was opened at Herrenhausen, where every petty prince that could muster and clothe a regiment might traffic with it to advantage."

duke undertook, therefore, to transmit to Frederic the inquiry whether, in case Hanover should be threatened, he, Frederic, would abstain from interference with such measures of defence as might be taken.¹ The question was included in a formal memorandum, with a series of hypothetical postulates, and much obscure argumentation. Frederic caused the reply to be made that every state had a right to take precautions for its own safety; that he had made no opposition to the treaty just concluded by England with Hesse; that the time had not yet come for a positive declaration on his part; but that he would be glad to see the differences between France and England amicably settled. The reigning duke was also to intimate that further negotiations would be made easier by concessions on the part of England in the matter of the captured Prussian ships.² A few days later the duke sent the minutes of a conversation with lord Holdernes, in which Frederic was invited through him to give a pledge not to attack Hanover, or to aid France in attacking it. But the pledge was evaded, and the mediation of Prussia again offered.³ Such was the beginning of a negotiation which in the sequel had the most momentous consequences.

Of all this the court of Austria knew, however, nothing. It only knew that for six weeks England had neglected to answer its last communication, and that the delay might be full of significance. Acting, therefore, on the theory that the ultimatum of June was not accepted, the ministers of the empress-queen held a solemn conference on the sixteenth of August to discuss the policy which, in view of this state of things, ought to be adopted. The conclusion was in favor of a strict neutrality, with the Netherlands

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 246, 247; Ranke, xxx. 118, 119.

² Frederic to prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, 10 August, 1755.

³ *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 251-254; Schaefer, *Geschichte des Siebenjährigen Krieges*, vol. i. App. pp. 605 et seq.

left to their fate. In this decision Kaunitz, without taking an active part, seemed to acquiesce.¹

It was, however, only negatively acceptable to him. It said in effect that no help should be given to England, and so far was proper; but it had the defect of offending England without obtaining any compensation on the other side. One ally would be lost and no other gained. Kaunitz seized the opening afforded by this false step with characteristic sagacity; and in reports to the empress-queen showed the danger of the situation, and the necessity of completing the work by obtaining security on the side of France. This was in effect the old plan of 1749, brought forward at a more favorable juncture, and with better prospects for success. Kaunitz set forth at great length the nature of the proposed step, the means by which it could be made easy, the goal toward which it ought to tend; and further conferences, held during the month, gave in the end a formal ratification to the scheme.

The empress-queen turns to France.

The chancellor aimed to form a grand league for the practical extinction of the Prussian state. Russia, France, Austria, Sweden, Saxony, the Palatinate, were to take part in it; and all were to be rewarded for their participation, most of them out of the territory of the victim. Saxony was to receive the district of Magdeburg; Sweden, Pomerania with the city of Stettin; Austria, of course, the province of Silesia. The kings of Spain and Sardinia were to be invited to join the league. Even the maritime powers, reasoned Kaunitz, would become reconciled to the scheme, when they reflected that so long as Prussia remained a menace to Austria no help against France could be expected from the empress-queen. The first thing was, however, to gain France. To that end Kaunitz proposed to offer Louis large cessions in the Netherlands for Don Philip of Spain, his son-in-law,

Plan of Kaunitz.

¹ Arneth, iv. 387; Beer, ubi supra, pp. 320, 321.

in exchange for the Italian duchies of Parma and Placentia; the throne of Poland for the prince Conti; and a reconciliation with the empress of Russia.

The council approved these terms, and Stahremberg was instructed accordingly. It was made his duty Stahremberg's instructions. to represent at Versailles how difficult it would be for the empress-queen to refuse her assistance to England unless strong inducements were offered her. But there was reason to believe that England was secretly planning an arrangement with Frederic, by which the interests of the Catholic religion, and the welfare of the houses of Austria and France, were to be sacrificed to his ambition. Such a scheme could be thwarted only by the most intimate union between the two leading Catholic powers. In broaching this subject the ambassador was advised to obtain communication with some trusted secret agent of Louis, and for that object to use the services either of prince Conti, or of madame de Pompadour, as he might judge most expedient.¹

His choice fell upon the Pompadour. From Kaunitz He employs the Pompadour. he had received, on setting out for his post, a letter of introduction to her; and, like the other ambassadors, he had occasionally made her visits, without acquiring, so far as appears, any great degree of intimacy. Now, a defensive alliance with Austria suited exactly her views of the political situation. It had long been her desire to confine the war, if it could not be avoided, to the colonies and the ocean, leaving Europe in peace, and her sway at Versailles undisturbed by the strenuous excitement of arms. Nor was this the only reason for her preference. A naval war would be largely under the direction of her friend and protégé, Machault, the minister of marine; while military campaigns in Europe would add to the opportunities and the influence of her

¹ Instructions for count Stahremberg, Austrian envoy to France, 21 August, 1755. Arneth, iv. 394-396. Cf. Beer, *ubi supra*, 322-328.

enemy, the minister of war, count d'Argenson. But a convention of neutrality with Austria, the old ally of England, would be likely to save the peace of Europe, or at least to prevent a general conflagration. Hence she gladly responded to the overtures of Kaunitz. By her efforts Louis was induced to appoint a secret agent to hold conferences and exchange views with Stahremberg. It is probable that her influence also led the king to fix his choice upon the abbé Bernis.

The abbé was one of those light and gay butterflies of fashion who fluttered about the marchioness, ^{The abbé Bernis.} coining epigrams for her entertainment, inditing verses in honor of her charms, and ministering, like a fervent and docile admirer, to her every wish or desire. He had political ambition, which she encouraged for her own ends. Through her he had been admitted to the diplomatic service; and, after a short term as ambassador to Venice, he was now awaiting orders to depart for his new post at Madrid. His real views in regard to the projected Franco-Austrian alliance have been the subject of no little dispute. It seems that he was one of the victims of Frederic's poetry;¹ and the probable feelings which he had toward that prince, together with the known part that he took in the negotiations, gave considerable support to the current theory that he, as well as the Pompadour, sought for revenge in a treaty and a combination aimed at the existence of Prussia. The opposite belief, that Bernis was really opposed to the new policy, and that he was chosen by Louis for negotiator against the wishes of madame de Pompadour, is held by his friend Duclos, and other contemporary writers.² It finds also some support

¹ "Et je laisse à Bernis la stérile abondance." *Œuvres de Frédéric*, x. p. 109.

² Duclos, *Mémoires secrets*, ed. Michaud, pp. 634, 635. The editor of the *Mémoires* of madame du Hausset, ed. Berville and Barrière, publishes in the same volume a curious defence of Bernis, ascribed to the well known Loménie de Brienne.

in the character itself of the abbé. Instead of a rash, adventurous, vindictive intriguer, he was rather a cautious and timid person; of a conciliatory temper, and a gentle, benevolent disposition; a man who could have forgiven Frederic a sneering line, and gone his way with a cheerful heart.

The first meeting between Bernis and Stahremberg took place on the third of September in the pretty villa known as "Babiola," situated near Sèvres, and owned by madame de Pompadour. A second followed four days later. At the third, held on the ninth of the month in the abbé's own apartments, the French answer was read to the ambassador.¹ It was in effect a refusal, and yet a refusal so worded as to seem to invite further discussion. His most Christian majesty still hoped, according to this paper, that wisdom and moderation would return to the counsels of England; that the captured French vessels would be restored; that war would be averted. The coöperation of the empress-queen in the work of preserving the peace of Europe would be cheerfully welcomed. But, without the most convincing proofs, his majesty would refuse to believe, or even to suspect, that the king of Prussia meditated treachery to France, or was planning an enterprise hostile to the Catholic religion. It would therefore first be necessary for the Austrian government to make known the facts on which it founded such a charge. Next, the two crowns ought to adopt temporary stipulations for the admission of French troops as friends into Ostende and Nieuport. A later formal treaty could then arrange the territorial transfers, and other details of the alliance.²

On this reply Arneth justly observes that, however vague and obscure parts of it might be, no one could fail to see that France was at that time unwilling to give aid to, or even passively to

France still
true to Prus-
sia.

¹ Arneth, iv. 398.

² Ibid., iv. 398, 399.

acquiesce in, any scheme directed against Prussia. In this respect it was therefore a disappointment. But Kaunitz refused to abandon his project, and cast about for some device to meet the difficulty.

Yet it must be confessed that during these months Frederic was putting the confidence of France to severe tests. He had no knowledge of the secret negotiations at Versailles. Knyphausen reported only a marked cordiality between the Austrian ambassador and Rouillé, which, as a clue to the real course of proceedings, was wide of the mark. From Vienna Klinggræffen described the efforts of the marquis d'Aubeterre, the French ambassador, to obtain credit at the court of the empress-queen by repeated assurances of his master's friendly disposition. Frederic himself in several letters vaguely hinted his suspicions that the two governments were coming together, just as he made every random circumstance, every new mystery, the ground for wild charges of treachery against his allies. But these suspicions he invariably described as only ideas floating in his mind, as hypotheses which had no support in actual information.¹

It does not appear, furthermore, that as to persons Frederic even suspected the existence of a party at the French court hostile to him, and in sympathy with Austria. He made frequent inquiries during the year 1755 about madame de Pompadour, her views and her influence. Knyphausen responded tardily, and was sharply rebuked for his want of zeal. But the envoy could only report that the marchioness was favorable to peace, or, if that were impossible, to the restriction of the war to the ocean and the colonies.² Bernis appears as an inoffensive person, of whose abilities Fred-

Frederic's
suspicions.

His views of
the French
court.

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 378, 382, 388, 389, etc.

² Knyphausen, 10 August; Frederic to Knyphausen, 2 December, 1755. *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 408-411.

eric had indeed a low opinion, but whose friendly sentiments he never for an instant doubted. As late as November he exchanged courtesies with the worthy abbé.¹ His feelings toward the leading personages at the French court were still those of previous years, only intensified perhaps by the growing gravity of the crisis. Ignorance, dulness, indecision; want of capacity alike for general views and for concentrated action; feebleness of judgment, of counsel, of purpose; indolence and procrastination; reluctance to give a frank answer to a frank question, or to face a critical problem with a manly resolution,—these vices Frederic found in abundance in the conduct of French politics, and they were vices which he bitterly hated. It is possible that his censures had some exaggeration; that he sometimes mistook a prudent hesitation to comply with his own impetuous demands for a sign of weakness, or folly, or insincerity. But with all the just causes which he had for complaining of the methods of the French ministry, with all the disposition which he had to magnify the faults and suspect the intentions of his ally, he showed at this time little alarm about the general loyalty of France to the existing engagements with Prussia. This should be kept in mind in estimating the rectitude of Frederic's own conduct in the more important lines or currents of international politics during the next few months.

The first of these concerned Saxony. France still labored earnestly to detach August from the system of the two empires, by inducing him to renew the French rather than the English treaty of subsidy and alliance. This policy, if successful, would have brought the electorate into the Franco-Prussian camp. But Frederic was unwilling to have Saxony as a friend, or even as the friend of his friend. Although he had co-operated with Broglie in opposing the Russian party in

Opposes
French
plans at
Dresden.

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 343, 400.

Poland, he looked with jealousy upon his negotiations at Dresden, and gave notice that the revival of the Franco-Saxon treaty would be taken as equivalent to a rupture of the alliance between Versailles and Berlin. He would decline in that case to renew his own treaty with France.¹

This was not, however, an affair of great importance. The real question seemed rather to be, how would Frederic interpret his duty, under his treaty engagements, when the conflict between France and England should actually break out, and he be called on to define his position? The attack of admiral Boscawen upon the French fleet made war inevitable. It was to be expected that the French, inferior on the ocean but superior on the land, would transfer the struggle to Europe, and at once bring Hanover, as the most vulnerable of all the possessions of George the Second, within the scope of their operations. What then would the king of Prussia do? The part assigned to him by the strategists of Versailles was to take possession of Hanover with a Prussian army corps on the outbreak of war, and to hold it while the troops of Louis operated in the Netherlands and elsewhere against the common enemy. This plan was pro-

Suggests a
French at-
tack on Ha-
nover.

¹ Frederic to Knyphausen, 30 August, 1 September, 28 October, to Maltzahn, 11 November, 1755. Cf. Broglie, *Secret du roi*, i. 128-130. Here an unexplained incident must be mentioned. In Frederic to Maltzahn, 29 September, allusion is made to certain letters. A note by the editor, *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 316, says these were dispatches of Rouillé and Broglie to Linau, secretary of the French legation at Dresden, and by him communicated to Maltzahn. But the editor ought to have noticed, if only to refute, the grave charge made by Broglie, on his return to Dresden after a leave of absence, that Maltzahn obtained access to the legation during a sudden and dangerous illness of Linau, and purloined these dispatches, together with the secret cipher, from the archives. Broglie, 12 December, 1755, apud duke de Broglie, *ubi supra*, p. 131. Herr von Vitzthum was of course on a false trail when he proclaimed with loud exultation that Frederic was the secret instigator of the French negotiations at Dresden. Vide *Geheimnisse des sächsischen Cabinets*, i. 256, 257.

posed, too, in reply to a widely different one sent out from Berlin. Early in April, Frederic, who was always generous with advice, urged upon the French government the propriety of occupying Hanover immediately on the declaration of war by England, and thus striking a decisive blow before the other side was ready for action.¹ The reply of the French ministers approved the end without approving the means. The occupation of Hanover would be a wise measure; but it was hoped that the king of Prussia would himself undertake that enterprise, which the proximity of his state made easy, and the costs of which could be defrayed from the resources of the province itself. The existing treaties did not indeed expressly stipulate for such a coöperation. Yet the interests of the two states were so closely allied that his Prussian majesty would doubtless have no hesitation in giving all reasonable aid against the enemy of both.² It may be questioned whether Rouillé really felt the confidence thus affably expressed to Knyphausen; for a diversion like that suggested against Hanover formed no article of Prussian policy. It was easier to propose, wrote Frederic, than to execute. Every summer he had sixty thousand Russians encamped on the frontiers of Prussia. Saxony was in the pay of England; the empress-queen could in a short time put eighty thousand men in motion; the intentions of Turkey on the one side, and of Denmark on the other, were uncertain. Without assurances of support from some quarter, it would be im-

But refuses
to make the
attack him-
self.

¹ "Vous ajouterez . . . qu'il faudrait que cela se fit incontinent et sans biaiser." Frederic to Knyphausen, 5 April, 1755. On the same day Frederic threw out the same suggestion to De la Touche, who had an audience. See the latter's report in Droysen, V. iv. 448. Frederic's own account of this incident, *Œuvres*, iv. 29, seems to put upon France the odium of first proposing an invasion of Hanover, and this version has been accepted by many historians, notably by Carlyle, iv. 418.

² Knyphausen, 25 April, 1755. *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 143, 144.

possible for Prussia to hazard the chances of war.¹ A little later the French ministers again sounded baron Knyphausen on the subject. Frederic replied as before that, while the treaties might make it necessary for him to interfere if other powers should attack France in Europe, he could not open hostilities against Hanover until the policy of England should be revealed.²

This decision of Frederic was the only possible one in the circumstances. Nothing would have pleased his enemies better than an act of aggression such as France proposed. It would not only have confirmed their theory of his turbulent and dangerous character, but would also have furnished the very *casus belli* against him which they so ardently desired. It is even doubtful if it would have served the best interests of France. Still the ministers of Louis were not perhaps required to take this view so long as they looked upon the intervention of Austria in behalf of England as certain, and therefore to be merely anticipated, not provoked, by a timely occupation of Hanover. Their view of the European situation, and their knowledge of Frederic's character, may not unnaturally have led them to regard the answers to their communications on the subject of Hanover as evidence of a disposition to evade a reasonable compliance with the spirit of existing treaties. Yet Frederic's own reluctance to invade Hanover was apparently not at all influenced by a desire to spare the country itself, or by respect for the rights of its legitimate ruler. Such scruples would have seemed strained and affected. And indeed, while the people were innocent of offence, the treacherous Hanoverian politicians, who from the secret corners of the castle of Herrenhausen, and with the tacit approval of George the Second, had often plotted the ruin of Prussia, had no right to expect forbearance at the hands of Frederic. Hence he did not scruple to

¹ Frederic to Knyphausen, 6 May, 1755.

² Same to same, 10 May, 1755.

urge repeatedly upon France the wisdom of a prompt attack on Hanover, if not by her own troops, then by those of Denmark, which he thought could be gained for such a service.¹

With Turkey, which he had hitherto trusted France to manipulate for the common cause, Frederic endeavored early in the year to open direct relations. On the accession of a new sultan he sent a certain Haude, under the name of von Rexin, to Constantinople as a special agent, charged to report on the feasibility of an alliance with the Porte, and on the character of the ministers and other principal persons; who could be bribed, and how much it would cost; and in general what was the state of political affairs and the tendency of foreign relations.² Rexin spent two or three months at Constantinople, and his mission was warmly supported by the Swedish resident, von Celsing. But it led to no immediate result. The sultan intimated to the unaccredited envoy that, as the suspicions of the Austrian and Russian ambassadors had become aroused, his presence was an embarrassment, and his return to Prussia would be a relief. Hence he took his departure. But since he carried with him an autograph letter from the sultan to Frederic, and also one from the grand vizier, both full of friendly sentiments, it was determined not long afterwards to dispatch another Prussian emissary, by a still more circuitous route, to take up the broken thread of negotiations.³

Far more significant as a gauge of Frederic's constancy than either the veto of the Saxon alliance or the refusal to invade Hanover, were finally the secret negotiations with England. These reached a crisis in the month of November. Frederic had natu-

Anglo-
Prussian
negotiations
resumed.

¹ Frederic to Knyphausen, 29 July, 9 August, 1755.

² Eichel to Podewils, 9 January, 1755.

³ Frederic to Knyphausen, 12 August; Podewils to Warendorf, 24 November, 1755. The new agent was a captain von Varenne.

rally hesitated to commit himself too far with lord Holdernessee so long as he was ignorant of the terms of the treaty between Russia and England. The general object was well understood. But were there secret stipulations which made it more inimical to Prussia, and which, in case of a conflict, would take precedence of any engagements that England might subsequently make with the court of Berlin? On these points Frederic had a right to be enlightened.

The treaty itself, as well as the convention with Hesse, was now about to come before parliament. Henry Fox made his terms with Newcastle, became secretary of state, and undertook the defence of both in the House of Commons. But Fox, with all his faults, was at least no pedant or dilettant in politics. As soon as he learned the state of the negotiations with Frederic, found what was the obstacle to their progress, and reflected that some of the opposition to the Russian treaty would be disarmed by a conciliatory policy toward Prussia, he offered to give a copy to Michell for transmission to Berlin. Holdernessee acquiesced in this measure. He assured Michell that his master was so anxious to convince the king of Prussia of his sincerity, that he would be willing to renew the guaranty of Silesia, and grant a reasonable indemnity for the captured ships.¹ Frederic accepted these offers as evidence of good faith. If the two governments, he wrote, could agree on a treaty for the neutrality of Germany, in which, however, to avoid offence, neither France nor Russia ought to be named, such petty questions as the claims of the injured ship-owners of Stettin and Embden would be easy to settle.²

Thus on the Prussian side the outlook seemed favor-

¹ Ranke, xxx. 125 ; *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 418, 419. But Ranke probably exaggerated the influence of this move upon party and parliamentary relations.

² Frederic to Michell, 7 December, 1755.

able. But in spite of this fact, which was insinuated in the course of the debate,¹ the subsidy treaties met with a violent opposition. Pitt especially distinguished himself by the energy and vehemence of his attacks, and he was ably supported by recruits from every disaffected faction. But Hardwicke in the upper and Murray in the lower house were skilful advocates, and in the end the ministry prevailed. The servile creatures of Newcastle and Fox rallied large majorities in either house ; and resolutions approving the object of the treaties, and appropriating the money needed to carry them into effect, were formally passed.² Pitt, Legge, Grenville, and earl Temple had to give up their places in the government as the price of their independence. The triumph of Fox seemed complete.

The subsidy treaties ratified by parliament.

The negotiations with Prussia, removed to London and conducted directly between Michell and Holdernessee, now made rapid progress. Frederic's own attention was indeed diverted just at this time by the scientific and even political interest which he took in the great earthquake at Lisbon. As a philosopher he explained that disastrous event by subterranean fires, which through their violence had caused convulsions on the earth's surface.³ The seismic theories of the king were probably derived from the academy, whose duty it was to furnish explanations of all unusual phenomena ;

Frederic moralizes on earthquakes.

¹ By Holdernessee, according to Michell, quoted by Ranke, xxx. 127 n.

² H. Walpole, *Geo. II.*, vol. ii. ; *Parl. Hist.*, xv. 659-663. The last named work is reasonably full on the debate in the Lords, but has little on the proceedings in the Commons. For these Walpole must be consulted, or Thackeray, *Life of Chatham*, vol. i., who, however, only reproduces Walpole's report. Cf. also H. Walpole to Conway, 15 November, 1755.

³ *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iv. 25. I write this in 1886, while the city of Charleston lies prostrate under the effects of a similar catastrophe.

but only he himself could have given a political significance to the great calamity. He wrote on the subject with almost feverish haste to his envoys abroad. Michell at London, von der Hellen at the Hague, Klinggræffen at Vienna, were ordered to report how the news of the disaster was received at their respective capitals. How had it affected stocks? What effect was it likely to have on the course of trade?¹ But the orders which he gave for a letter of condolence to the king and queen of Portugal show that he was also not insensible to the appeals made to his humanity by such a tragical and awful event; while in his literary works the moralist spoke after the historian and the philosopher. It was not enough, he said, that Europe had to suffer in this way from the angry forces of nature. Soon afterwards malevolence put arms into the wicked hands of men; hatred, obstinacy, vengeance, carried them to the last excess. All Europe was bathed in blood; and the moral evils, of which the human race was the victim, far surpassed the physical evils which Lisbon suffered.² This was written in 1764, by the prince who, eight years before, at the time of the earthquake, was striving, through the aid of a treaty with England, to avert the still greater social disasters.

In the mean time the rival or parallel negotiations of Austria at Paris moved slowly. When the French answer to the first set of propositions reached Vienna, consultations were promptly held upon the step next to be taken. Two courses were open. One was to meet the French challenge by proving that Frederic was preparing to betray his old ally, as the first overtures had asserted. The other was to abandon that charge, and to announce the readiness of Austria to unite with Spain and other powers for the support of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle against any state that should

Renewed
efforts of
Kaunitz at
Versailles.

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 425, 426, 432, etc.

² *Œuvres de Frédéric*, ubi supra.

violate its provisions, that is, should begin war in Europe. The latter plan was adopted, though it involved a retreat from the earlier position. And this was the more singular because, while the original charge against Prussia had been made without any evidence to sustain it, Kaunitz had in the mean time learned of the secret intrigues between England and Prussia, and was thus really stronger than at first in that line of argument.¹ But the second answer of France was no more satisfactory than the first. The report of count Stahremberg was to the effect that the French ministers still doubted the sincerity of Austria, and suspected that her only object in the negotiations was to frighten England into the payment of large subsidies.²

Still Kaunitz, though disappointed, was not discouraged. He argued that it was worth something to establish the fact that France was not irreconcilably hostile, and the chances were still even that the course of events might yet crown his plan with success. But even he thought it best not to make another move until after the debates in parliament, which it was supposed would decide the question of peace or war.³ By that time, too, the result of the mission of the special French envoy to Berlin would probably be known.

The choice of Louis for this important duty had fallen upon the duke of Nivernois, a peer of the realm, Nivernois. and one of the most considerable of French noblemen. He was selected with special reference to Frederic's personal tastes. To the possession of an ancient name and great wealth he added the advantage of generous culture, wide intellectual sympathies, membership

¹ A. Beer, *ubi supra*, 329-332, and Vitzthum, *Geheim. d. säch. Cab.*, i. 239-242. The report of Flemming, the Saxon minister, who was at Hanover, and which should be dated 19 August, not April, as Vitzthum has it, shows that he and Colloredo were given hints on the subject about the same time, and by no other than Holdernessee. Cf. also *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 295-298.

² Beer, p. 334.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

in the academy, and an acquaintance with all the leading men of letters and science at the French capital. He was, besides, a man of high character, of engaging social manners, of a frank and open disposition. Such an envoy the French court had every reason to suppose would be personally agreeable to the king of Prussia, and would be recognized as a witness for the sincerity of its intentions. Nor was it deceived, at least in respect to the first part of the hypothesis. Frederic, when sounded on the subject, as early as August, declared that the duke would be quite acceptable to him, and that he hoped his special mission would be made permanent.¹

Yet the strange feebleness and indecision which marked the court and cabinet of Louis ruined any plans that might have been founded on so auspicious a choice. Frederic was not less anxious to receive Nivernois than to dismiss De la Touche. Yet the departure of the new envoy was unaccountably delayed. Appointed in August, or even in July, his instructions were only prepared in October, and he did not reach Berlin until the middle of January, 1756. Such procrastination was not at all to the taste of Frederic, nor were the duke's instructions the product of a very wise diplomacy.

Arrives in
Berlin as
French
envoy.

Nivernois was to explain, first of all, the desire of his government to dictate terms of peace to England in America. If this plan should fail, France intended to appeal to the parties to the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. But as it was foreseen, according to Knyphausen, that such an appeal would be futile, its only use would be to obtain a convenient pretext for belligerent measures in Europe. Hence the French envoy was to urge Frederic once again and more formally to coöperate by a diversion against Hanover. Russia, it was urged, could be held in check by a demonstration to be made by

His instructions.

¹ Kaunitz, 26 November, 1755, apud Beer, *ubi supra*, p. 336.

the Porte, a naval union between Sweden and Denmark,¹ an uprising in Poland, and a confederation of German princes favorable to the Franco-Prussian system. In return for the services of Prussia, Nivernois was authorized to offer Frederic the sovereignty over the island of Tabago, the French title to which England disputed. Next he was to press the renewal of the treaty of 1741, the chief basis of the alliance of the two courts, and finally to endeavor to reconcile Frederic to the proposed treaty with Saxony.²

These instructions Frederic called vague and puerile.

Frederic
offers terms
to England.

The offer of Tabago he treated as a pleasantry, and said the French would have to find some other Sancho Panza for their island of Barataria.³ Even without the folly of the instructions, and the insufficiency of the bribe, the mission of Nivernois was, however, doomed to failure, for he arrived after Frederic's decision was already made. Toward the end, the French ministers had indeed tried languidly to hasten the envoy's departure, because they had begun to suspect a mysterious intimacy between Prussia and England. But Frederic caused these reports to be positively contradicted.⁴ He left Knyphausen, like the other envoys, in essential ignorance, until the last moment, of the impending change of front. He became, too, less anxious than formerly for the early arrival of Nivernois. He preferred to meet the French envoy, not while the negotiation with England was still in progress, but rather after it should be closed, suc-

¹ On this project see the opinion of count Bernstorff, the Danish minister, dated 1 September, 1755, in *Correspondance Ministerielle du comte de Bernstorff*, by P. Vedel, Copenhagen, 1882, vol. i. pp. 122-138.

² Knyphausen, 24 October, 1755, *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 371-374; Flassan, vi. 44, 45.

³ Frederic to Knyphausen, 8 November, 1755; *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iv. 31.

⁴ Knyphausen, 17 November; Frederic to Knyphausen, 2 December, 1755.

cessfully or unsuccessfully, when either the change of system could be announced as complete, or, on account of its failure, recourse could frankly be had to the alliance of France.¹ His own general views of what the treaty with England should contain were given in the instruction of the seventh of December.² These were promptly laid before lord Holdernessee, and a week later Michell was able to forward the draft of a convention submitted by the English cabinet.³

The object of the proposed treaty was to secure Prussia against attack from Russia, and Hanover against attack from France. But in form it was to be a treaty for the neutrality of the German Empire. The first article declared that each party would abstain from attacking the territory of the other, and would use its influence with its allies to prevent them from making any attack. By the second article the contracting powers were to agree to unite their forces for opposing any foreign state which should invade the Empire with a hostile army. The third article renewed all existing treaties of guaranty between the two governments. Such was the English project. It can scarcely be necessary to explain that for Frederic the value of this negotiation, and of the new policy itself, turned mainly upon the ability of England, in which Holdernessee had expressed the strongest confidence, to control, by means of the subsidies to be paid under the treaty of St. Petersburg, the Russian forces now assembling in Livonia.

On the first day of the new year the English draft was submitted to Podewils. The intimation of Ranke, that this was the earliest knowledge which Podewils had of the scheme, is somewhat misleading; for although the correspondence had been carried on by Frederic directly, so that his minister may have been

English
draft of a
treaty.

Podewils
suggests
modifications.

¹ Frederic to the duke of Brunswick, 24 November, 1755.

² *Supra*, p. 249.

³ *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 1-5.

ignorant of the details and the progress of the negotiation, he was apparently aware in a general way of the new movement.¹ The treaty was therefore no surprise to him. In general, too, he approved both its object and its terms; though he advised the substitution of "Germany" for "German Empire," as the designation for the area to which the mutual guaranty of neutrality should apply. The reason for this was that the Austrian Netherlands, although not a part of Germany, might be regarded technically as a part of the Empire, and Prussia of course could not undertake the defence of a possession of the empress-queen against France. Frederic saw at once the force of this suggestion. Michell was authorized to sign the treaty only with this change, and, to remove all doubt, the addition of a supplementary article expressly excluding the Netherlands from its scope.² The English ministers seem which are accepted. to have made little opposition to the proposed changes. On the sixteenth of January the treaty was signed in essentially the form demanded by Frederic. A declaration appended to the text provided that Great Britain should pay twenty thousand pounds sterling for the satisfaction of the injured Prussian ship-owners, and Prussia should in like manner liquidate the outstanding remainder of the Silesian debt.³

¹ With Ranke, xxx. 129, contrast Eichel to Podewils, 16 December, and Podewils' reply, 17 December, 1775. *Polit. Corresp.*, xi. 435, 438, also the editor's notes.

² Podewils to Eichel, and Eichel to Podewils, 1 January; Frederic to Michell, 4 January, 1756, and, same date, "Instruction secrète au sieur Michell," containing the Prussian counter-project. It may be observed that the same distinction held good in the case of Bohemia, which belonged to the German Empire, but not to Germany; while, on the other hand, Frederic's own province of Preussen was, perhaps, a part of Germany, but not of the Empire.

³ Wenck, iii. 84-87, gives the treaty with some unessential errors. For the exact text, see Schaefer, i. 582-584. The Treaty of Westminster it is commonly called. It is of course inexact to say with Stuhr, *Forschungen*, i. 31, 32, that the king of Prussia explained its provisions to Nivernois *many* days before it was signed.

All diplomatic obstacles being thus removed, it only remained to get the approval of parliament. But this was a difficult and in one respect a delicate task. Murray, the solicitor-general, who had defended the English prize courts against Cocceji, felt naturally some awkwardness in supporting a treaty which practically conceded the justice of the Prussian case. And Pitt spared neither the learned advocate, nor the convention itself. He would not have signed it, he said, for the five great places of those who did sign it, which was perhaps a rhetorical exaggeration.¹ In any event, the opposition were unable to rally a majority, for the ministry still commanded the field.

Ratification
of the treaty
by parlia-
ment.

No effort was made to conceal the new engagement. Holdernessee ordered the text to be communicated in full both at Vienna and at St. Petersburg, together, of course, with such explanations as it was thought would make it more palatable to the two courts. But this policy of frankness, whether based on sincerity or artfulness, was not successful. At Vienna it was considered not only treacherous on the part of king George secretly to negotiate a treaty with Prussia, but presumptuous also for him to arrange the neutrality of Germany without consulting the emperor; and such resentment was not at all incompatible with the secret joy which Kaunitz must have felt at a transaction so well fitted to help his intrigues at Paris.² In Russia the indignation was even greater, because at first unmodified by any prospect of ul-

Effect of the
treaty at Vi-
enna and St.
Petersburg.

¹ H. Walpole, *George II.*, ii. 194 et seq. Newcastle, Fox, Holdernessee, Hardwicke, and lord Granville (Carteret) were the five. Walpole probably expressed the public opinion of the treaty better than Pitt when he wrote, 22 January, 1756, to sir H. Mann, that he thought the French would not declare war, since the king of Prussia had been Russianized out of their alliance.

² It was of course in this sense that the chancellor later called the treaty "ein entscheidendes Ereigniss zu Oesterreich's Heil." Ar-neth, iv. 419. Cf. Ranke, xxx. 145.

timate advantage. The English ratification of the subsidy treaty had been accompanied by an intimation that the Russian troops were to be called into service only in case Hanover should be attacked. This reservation, being evidently intended for Frederic's satisfaction, was duly communicated to Michell.¹ But the empress Elizabeth was not at all pleased with the construction thus put upon the treaty; long postponed the ratification on her part; and, when she finally gave it, added a declaration to the effect that the Russian troops should be used only against Prussia. Should the king of Prussia attack England, or an ally of England, they would march at once, said the imperial declaration.² But among the allies of England the Russian ministers purposely reckoned Austria; and this language, though not understood by Williams at the time, was doubtless carefully chosen and proved to be full of significance. Indeed, the real aim of Russian policy had again been solemnly proclaimed in a grand council held at Warsaw not long after the conclusion of the treaty with England. In 1753 Russia resolved to defend any ally attacked by Prussia. But two years later the council declared that the empress would even assist any power which should begin a war against her hated and dangerous neighbor.³ Now, two days after the ratification of the subsidy treaty, when the text of the convention of Westminster arrived, the rage of the empress passed all control. To the Austrian ambassador she declared that she would have refused her ratification if she had known of

¹ Cf. Frederic to Michell, 2 December, 1755; Droysen, V. iv. 476. The act of ratification was sent to Williams on the 18th of November.

² 14 February, 1756, O. S., Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 308-311; Holder-nesse to Keith, 21 June, 1756, *ibid.* ii. 344. Cf. Schaefer, i. 144.

³ Funcke to Bruhl, 20 October, 1755, *apud* Hertzberg, *Recueil*, i. 57. Cf. Arneth, iv. 434. Frederic was not left uninformed by Maltzahn of the general tenor of these resolutions. Vide Eichel to Podewils, 20 December, 1755.

England's treachery, and roundly denounced Bestuschef as a man who had been bribed by British gold to advise her against her real interests.¹

Frederic succeeded no better in convincing his own ally, the king of France, of the purity of his motives.

He gave a copy of the treaty to Nivernois; ex-^{At Paris.}plained its objects; and said he would not object to a similar arrangement between Austria and France.² Podewils was supplied with autograph minutes of the arguments which it would be advisable to use in his interviews with the French envoy, and Ranke seems to regard them as faithfully reproducing the king's views. They took the fantastic form of a debate between maître Frederic and maître Rouillé, in which the former won, of course, an easy victory on the questions both of law and of fact.³ Knyphausen at Paris was ordered to use essentially the same arguments with the French ministers. "I have already informed you by an earlier letter," writes Frederic, "that the propositions made here by the duke of Nivernois tend solely to the renewal of my treaty of alliance with France. But I wish to explain, for your personal direction, that as the court of London urged me to conclude a convention for the neutrality of Germany, with the object of excluding the troops of all foreign

¹ Esterhazy's report briefly in Arneth, iv. 434, more at length in Ranke, xxx. 162, 163.

² Flassan, vi. 44.

³ Ranke, xxx. 251-255; *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 49, 50, 114, 115. The arguments favorable to the Prussian case were, first, "cause de droit," I have not guaranteed America; my alliance with France is only defensive; it is about to terminate: and, secondly, "cause de fait," Hanover, Russia, and Austria can put 200,000 men in the field, to which I can oppose only 100,000. If the enemy were united, I should not hesitate to attack them; but divided, they can overwhelm me. Yet the Russians should be prevented from entering the Empire, because their junction with other enemies of Prussia would make them too strong. Hence the treaty of Westminster was the best for all parties.

powers from the Empire, and as my own critical situation forbade me to reject such overtures, I have communicated to the duke the whole nature of my negotiations with England, and the treaty with which they ended. If the French ministry is well advised, and will take into careful consideration the true posture of affairs, it will find no reasonable objection to this measure. I flatter myself rather that by it I have rendered an essential service to France. It arrests the march of fifty thousand Russians, and holds in check an equal number of Austrians, all of whom would otherwise have taken the field against France;¹ and yet it interferes in no way with measures which the French government may desire to take for carrying on the war elsewhere." Then, in a postscript, follows an order, which the reader will compare with the reply said to have been given to a similar message brought half a dozen years earlier by Voltaire. "The duke of Nivernois having said much to me of madame de Pompadour," writes the king, "you will take occasion to make her a visit, and explain to her, with a well-turned compliment, how gratified I was by the assurances which the duke gave of her friendly sentiments."²

The Pompa-
dour again.

In a second dispatch, written almost before the ink on

¹ This reference to Austria seems to show that Frederic knew nothing of the negotiations between Stahremberg and Bernis.

² Frederic to Knyphausen, 24 January, 1756. In another letter, of the 3d of February, this passage occurs: "madame de Pompadour m'a fait faire quelques avances par le duc de Nivernois, auxquelles j'ai aussi répondu par son moyen. Je crois donc qu'il conviendra que vous alliez quelquefois . . . chez elle pour lui dire des obligations de ma part. . . . Je me persuade que . . . cela aplanira beaucoup d'aigreur qui tient peut-être au cœur des ministres," etc. *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 73. Notwithstanding the diligence with which Schaefer searched the Prussian archives, he makes the mistake of saying, vol. i. p. 137, that this was Frederic's first attempt to gain the Pompadour.

this one was dry, Frederic speaks, in the same easy tone of assurance, of his belief that the French ministers would at once recognize the benevolent ^{Frederic's delusion.} aims of the Anglo-Prussian treaty.¹ But it is difficult to see how Frederic could feel the confidence which he thus professed; for, in spite of their indolence and incapacity, the French ministers were not so devoid of sense as to regard a treaty by which Prussia undertook the defence of Hanover against their troops as the act of a friendly ally. Knyphausen's reports early showed the folly of such a delusion, and made known the extreme displeasure with which the news of the treaty had been received in France.² In reply, Frederic again urged the innocence of his proceeding; said he was willing, if the French government showed a conciliatory spirit, to renew the treaty of 1741; but if Rouillé should foolishly attempt to obtain better terms at Vienna, as was known to be his secret purpose, Prussia had further resources yet at her command.³

¹ Frederic to Knyphausen, 3 February; to Darget, 16 February, 1756.

² Knyphausen, 30 January, 1755. *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 93 et seq. When tardily notified by Frederic, on the 3d of January, 1756, of the near conclusion of a treaty with England, the envoy wrote, 21 January, too late therefore for effect, a cogent appeal to the king to take no such momentous step without a previous understanding with France. It may be noted that Luyne enters in his journal, *Mémoires*, xiv. 401, the opinion that the treaty might be of some advantage to France by keeping the Russians out of the fray. He adds: "M. de Knyphausen . . . dit assez hautement que le roi son maître avait offert à la France de traiter avec elle pour faire de concert une irruption dans les états de Hanovre, et que cette proposition n'a point été acceptée." If the envoy said this, he certainly made somewhat free use of facts. Darget, 2 March, 1756, adds his testimony to that of Knyphausen in regard to the effect of the treaty on public opinion at Paris.

³ Frederic to Knyphausen, 10 February, 1756. This letter contained another allusion to the all-powerful favorite. "Tâchez de flatter la Pompadour pour voir si peut-être elle se lâchera, et dira par emportement ce que les ministres cachent par sagesse. Peut-être

Frederic thus assumed, or affected to assume, that France was a suppliant at the court of Austria.¹

Nothing could have been farther from the truth. In spite of the irritation felt in Paris at the treaty of Westminster, and the promptness with which Kaunitz seized the advantage offered by it, the French government was not yet disposed to throw itself unconditionally into the arms of Austria. It was now indeed willing to abandon the alliance with Prussia, and to this extent recognized the changed features of the situation. But for such a concession it would accept nothing less than the price offered six months before, when the Franco-Prussian system had been shaken by no treaty of Westminster, and when the empress-queen felt the necessity of bidding high for French support. Or a treaty might be concluded on the basis of the counter-terms offered at the time by France.² Over this alternative the two courts, represented by Stahremberg and Bernis, skirmished during the first two or three months of the year. France was ready to conclude a simple treaty of neutrality and mutual guaranty, or a treaty aimed at Prussia as originally proposed by Kaunitz. But in the latter case the engagements must be reciprocal; the empress-queen must adopt toward England the same policy which Louis was asked to adopt toward Prussia.

To this demand it was difficult to oppose any solid objection, and Stahremberg was therefore authorized to accept it in principle.³ But the empress-queen was still prevented from taking up an attitude of distinct hostility toward England by uncertainty about the course of Russia. Would Elizabeth

sera-ce elle qui réconciliera les choses." Cf. Frederic to Knyphausen, 14, 16, 21 February, 1756, etc.

¹ Cf. Frederic to Knyphausen, 24 April, 1756.

² Arneth, iv. 418. Vide supra, p. 242.

³ 6 March, 1756. Arneth, iv. 427.

The negotia-
tions at
Versailles.

Dilemma of
the empress-
queen.

repudiate the subsidy treaty with England, because it no longer gave her the means of taking vengeance on the king of Prussia, and had therefore lost its value? Or would she adhere to the engagement on account of its ratification, notwithstanding the convention of Westminster? It was important to be informed on this point, not only for the guidance of Austrian diplomacy, but also because the French court required the fulfilment of the promise, early given, that Russia would be brought as an ally into the new system.

Louis himself had indeed anticipated not only the mediation of Austria, but even the offer of France and Russia. mediation. As early as June, 1755, he had sent to St. Petersburg one Douglas, a Scotch Jacobite, on a secret mission to inquire into the state of feeling and the political tendencies at the Russian capital.¹ The mysterious chevalier d'Eon accompanied him as secretary, but disguised as his niece. Douglas' mission proved a failure, and he was early compelled to retire; but D'Eon, who had ingratiated himself into the favor of Elizabeth, remained as French reader to her majesty. Thus a link of communication was preserved between Paris and St. Petersburg. Early the next year D'Eon was able to transmit a request from the empress that a regularly accredited French envoy be appointed, and Douglas was sent back in that capacity. The chevalier, donning male attire, then became secretary of legation. But the first positive assurance which Kaunitz had of Elizabeth's intentions was a declaration made the first week of April to Esterhazy, that she was prepared to take Warlike declaration of Elizabeth. part that year, with eighty thousand men, in a war against the king of Prussia; and would not lay down

¹ Instructions secrètes . . . au chevalier Douglas, chargé d'une mission secrète en Russie, 1 June, 1755. Boutaric, *Correspondance secrète de Louis XV.*, i. 83, 230 et seq. The real name of the emissary was MacKenzie.

her arms until Maria Theresa was again in possession of Silesia. She was also ready to accede to the proposed alliance between France and Austria. "A message of comfort and encouragement beyond even our most sanguine hopes," cried Kaunitz, when this report reached him.¹ He now began to see the end of his labors.

At this time the utmost confidence was still professed by the English ministers in the fidelity of Russia. Even the letters of Williams reported that the empress had nearly recovered from the first feelings of indignation caused by the Anglo-Prussian treaty, and had let herself be persuaded by Bestuschef to accept the situation in good faith. But Frederic, for whom the question had the most vital importance, was not convinced. The documents, which Maltzahn continued to furnish from the archives of Dresden, were sufficiently grave to justify suspicion, and to warrant the urgent representations made to England, though indeed they were not clear enough to form a basis for positive charges.² The same obscurity reigned at Berlin in regard to the relations between France and Austria. Frederic had finally become convinced that negotiations were in progress between the two courts, and it pleased him to characterize them by the term "chipotage." His envoys were quick to seize their master's humor. The chipotage of Paris and Vienna became a regular subject of discussion in the rescripts of the king and the reports of the envoys; and innumerable pages of speculation on the subject have been published from the archives of Berlin. At first Frederic doubted the possibility of any reconciliation between the two ancient enemies. Then he was assured by Knyphausen that nothing

Doubts and
uncertain-
ties of
Frederic.

¹ Arneth. iv. 435.

² Michell, 23 March; Frederic to Maltzahn and to Michell 13 April, to Michell 24 April; Williams, 6 and 16 March, 1756, apud Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 314. But later reports from Williams were less favorable.

more was intended than a formal and harmless treaty of friendship. For a moment a glimpse was obtained of the proposed exchange of territory with Don Philip, but the conjectures based on this rumor soon gave way to one which made the support of France for the election of the archduke Joseph as king of the Romans the leading object of the *pourparlers*. The two Catholic powers had chiefly in view the Romanizing of the principality of Hesse, when the heir apparent, who had abjured Protestantism, should succeed to the throne. They were planning the political rearrangement of Italy; the neutralization of the Netherlands; the admission of a French army into the electorate of Hanover. All of these and even other hypotheses were broached by Frederic and his envoys to explain negotiations which they knew were in progress, but could not positively explain. Toward the end, their information about the terms of the treaty or treaties first to be concluded became more exact. But the full scope of Kaunitz's project seems hardly to have been suspected.¹

During this time the relations of France with Prussia were outwardly of a friendly and even confidential character. Frederic was kept informed of Valori again in Berlin. the French military plans; and he even added suggestions of his own on the best method of striking England, his ally, including even two expeditions across the channel, one to effect a landing in Ireland, the other on the coast near Portsmouth.² Without these confidences it might not unreasonably be suspected that the French efforts to renew the treaty of 1741 were insincere. But,

¹ Instead of giving a multitude of citations I shall simply refer the reader, who may wish to verify these statements, to vol. xii. of the *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, Berlin, 1884. Dr. Naudé has edited this volume with great care, and his notes leave little to desire.

² Ranke, xxx. 136.

sincere or insincere, they had no success. The special envoy, the duke of Nivernois, though he had been treated with great consideration by Frederic, took his leave early in April, and returned to France with absolutely nothing to show for his mission. The French resident, the chevalier de la Touche, departed at the same time. As his successor appeared, or reappeared, the marquis Valori, whom Frederic gladly welcomed. He could not indeed deny himself a pleasantry at the expense of the worthy envoy. Prince August having reported the appearance of a new comet, Frederic replied that it must be the fat Valori, whose arrival had been so long expected.¹

Valori's instructions were "to use his best efforts to discover how far the engagements of the king of Prussia with the king of England go; what are his views in regard to the courts of England, Vienna, and Russia; what are his true dispositions toward France; and to make an exact report of what he can learn, in order that his most Christian majesty can decide whether it is expedient to renew his treaty with the king of Prussia."² He was thus merely to observe everything, but propose nothing; and for such a duty it was probably supposed that his acquaintance with the Prussian court, and his friendly relations with Frederic, made him specially fitted. He obtained indeed from Frederic the admission that the treaty with England was in point of form an offence to France.³ But this was a barren triumph; and it may be doubted whether the French ministers had any serious

¹ Frederic to the prince of Prussia, 2 March, 1756. This title, "prince of Prussia," had been conferred by royal edict upon August William, the eldest brother of the reigning king, in the absence of lineal heirs. The present king William (1887) also bore it during the reign of his childless brother, Frederic William IV.

² Valori, *Mémoires*, i. 39, 40. This extract from the instructions is given by the author of the life of Valori included in the memoirs. Cf. Flassan, vi. 45.

³ Valori, i. 302.

purpose in his mission, in view of the stage now reached in the progress of their negotiations with Austria.

The alternative offered by France toward the end of February, of a treaty on the basis of the first overtures of Austria, including an offensive league against Frederic and the partition of Prussia, or a simple convention of neutrality for the impending war, was somewhat embarrassing to Kaunitz. Even the original Austrian project was accepted only with certain modifications. Louis no longer desired to press the candidacy of prince Conti for the Polish throne; and, evidently because it was considered unwise to weaken Prussia to such an extent that the balance of the Empire would be destroyed, Bernis hesitated about the partition scheme; asked why it was proposed to include a number of minor powers in the alliance; and urged that Austria and Russia alone would suffice for the work.¹ To continue the negotiation on the basis of this project alone seemed therefore to Kaunitz to run the risk of failure, or at least of a delay equal to failure. But a mere neutrality convention would leave the Franco-Prussian alliance intact. Hence he decided to labor for both treaties; to keep the more important yet more difficult one in view, while pressing the speedy conclusion of the simpler and easier one; to set forth the necessity of a general league against Prussia, while postponing the details until a later period. The forces of Austria and Russia alone, it was urged, would not give that absolute assurance of success which was desirable. The empress of Russia would expect, on renouncing the English subsidies, to receive the same amount from the rival system, and this could only be furnished by France. Some assurance would have to be given on this point; and there were others which needed to be made satisfactory to Austria. But, with an under-

Progress of
the Austro-
French
negotiations.

¹ Arneth, iv. 421-425, from Stahrenberg's report of the 27th February, 1756.

standing that due weight should be given to these representations, and that the offensive treaty should be taken up early in an earnest spirit, the empress-queen was willing to sign at once a preliminary convention of neutrality, and a defensive alliance.¹ In what concerned the principle of reciprocity it was conceded that, since Austria could not directly attack England, France should not be required to take part in an offensive campaign against Prussia. Indeed, the two imperial courts would not be ready for operations before the coming year.

The very day which heard the triumphant shout of the Austrian chancellor over the good news from Russia, the nineteenth of April, was chosen at Paris for a solemn meeting of the French ministers to listen to Bernis' account of the course and present state of his negotiations with Stahremberg, and to give a final opinion upon these latest Austrian propositions. The decision of Louis to accept their general principle was known. The Pompadour had not been shaken in her views by all the visits of Knyphausen, or all the attentions of Frederic who, had even offered, at his envoy's suggestion, to write her an autograph letter ;² and she was now more earnest than ever in her support of the Austrian alliance. For two or three months the end had been practically foreseen, and the work of this council was little more than a form. It is true that warning voices were still raised. The marquis Puy sieux, who was present by invitation, and count d'Argenson, pointed out the gravity of the step, the danger that it might lead to a war of religions, and the necessity of proceeding with the utmost caution. But in

An agree-
ment
reached.

¹ Arneth, iv. 428-430.

² " Il faudrait, avant que cette correspondance fût entamée, qu'elle me fît dire des propos, et moi après de même à elle, qui sauraient m'amener en après de lui écrire une lettre directement." Frederic to Knyphausen, 2 March, 1756.

the end the council voted an unanimous approval of the royal decision.¹

The redaction of the formal treaties, which were to embody the results of these negotiations, was left to Bernis and Stahremberg. They began at once, worked industriously, and in ten days were ready to report. On the first of May, at Jouy, the treaties were signed, by Rouillé and Bernis for France, and by Stahremberg on the part of Austria. And signed
1 May, 1756.

The first of these two instruments, which are known collectively as the treaty of Versailles, was a simple act of neutrality for the coming war. Treaty of
Versailles. Austria declared that she would take no part, directly or indirectly, in the hostilities. France promised to regard the conflict as purely one between herself and England; not to endeavor to draw any third power into it; and especially not to attack the Netherlands, or any possession of the empress-queen.² The other instrument was a treaty of friendship and defensive alliance, and the terms employed were not different from those usual in such compacts. After the customary pledges of eternal friendship, and reciprocal promises to commit no act of aggression or hostility, the treaty of Westphalia of 1648, and all subsequent treaties of peace, including also the act of neutrality just adopted, were renewed and confirmed;

¹ Stahremberg, 2 May, 1756, apud Arneth, iv. 442. Flassan, vi. 50, mentions D'Argenson and Machault as the hesitating members. The same writer gives some extracts from an alleged letter of Stahremberg to madame de Pompadour, dated 20 April, and intended apparently to remove her objections to the proposed alliance. Arneth, iv. 440, though he can find no evidence of such a letter in the reports of Stahremberg, or in the Austrian archives, does not deny that it may have been written. It may, however, be observed that as the decision of the council was made known to the count on the twentieth, he would have had no occasion to write to the Pompadour on the same day urging her to use her influence to get a favorable decision.

² Wenck, iii. 139 141.

each of the contracting powers agreed to furnish a force of twenty-four thousand men for the defence of the European possessions of the other, when attacked, the existing war between France and England being, in accordance with the act of neutrality, expressly excepted; and other powers were to be, or rather might be, invited to become parties to the treaty. Two separate articles finally satisfied all scruples of etiquette by declaring that the use of the French language and the order in which the two sovereigns were named should not be drawn into a precedent for the future.¹

So far the treaty had a fairly innocent look, and did not greatly differ from the one which Frederic had said he was willing to see concluded between the two courts, in imitation of his own treaty of Westminster. It is true, as has been often pointed out, that it gave Austria the power, by provoking Frederic to hostilities, to demand the aid of her new ally. But this is the case with all treaties of defensive alliance, in a measure even of the treaty between Prussia and England. This particular objection to the treaty of Versailles would therefore be wanting in force if there had been no articles except those included in the body of the instrument. Such was, of course, not the case. The Austrian court would have been ill-satisfied with a merely defensive treaty, even if it did secure the Netherlands, unless it also took account of the far-reaching ulterior schemes which inspired the original overtures from Vienna; and accordingly five secret articles, signed at the same time, made provision for a positive and aggressive future. The exception made of the pending war was declared not to apply in case any ally of England should attack his most Christian majesty.² Neither power should, during the

The secret
articles.

¹ Wenck, iii. 141 147.

² Secret Art. I. The point of this was, of course, that if Prussia should oppose the invasion of Hanover by the French, the casus

continuance of the war, enter into any new engagements without the knowledge of the other. And, most important of all, the two courts promised to begin at once negotiations looking to the completion of the work of the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, and the final settlement of such territorial disputes as were likely in the future to disturb the peace of Europe.¹ This article, the third, was clearly aimed at the king of Prussia, and was therefore a concession to Austrian diplomacy.

The court of Vienna was still not quite satisfied with the treaty. Louis XV. ratified it promptly the day after it was signed, but count Stahremberg Ratifications exchanged. wrote to Vienna that the French ministers had in view the cession of the Netherlands to France, not to Don Philip, and that the subsidies to be paid to Russia would probably be a subject of contention. Kaunitz saw the force of this warning, and it was only in the hope that the future would remedy all defects that, on the nineteenth of May, the treaty was ratified at Vienna.² Nine days later at Paris the ratifications were exchanged.

Soon after the happy close of this long negotiation Kaunitz, at the suggestion of Stahremberg, addressed a letter of thanks to madame de Pompadour for the efficient part which she had taken. Maria Theresa and madame de Pompadour.

A present, which Louis permitted her to accept, was sent to her two years later in the name of the empress-queen.³ But for the story current at the time in French society, embodied in the contemporary memoirs, reported by an English envoy in 1761,⁴ and accepted by all historians for *foederis* would arise. The stipulation proves conclusively that Kaunitz felt certain that Russia, notwithstanding the treaty with England, would furnish no troops against France.

¹ Schaefer, i. 584, 585, has the literal text, Arneth, iv. 443, 444, the substance, of these secret articles.

² Arneth, iv. 450.

³ Ibid., 463 ; v. 153, 457.

⁴ Mr. Stanley, Paris, 20 August, 1761, to Pitt, in Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii. 598.

a century, that Maria Theresa won the French king for the anti-Prussian alliance by a letter in which she condescended to address the base favorite as her "dear cousin," no evidence has ever been discovered in any of the archives of Europe. The text of such a pretended letter has never been given. The empress-queen herself, when questioned later on the subject, indignantly denied that she had ever written to the Pompadour, or that her ministers had had with her other relations than those which all the foreign envoys of Paris were careful to cultivate. This denied indeed too much. But Ranke, who gives the text of this letter, justly says that, while Maria Theresa might easily have forgotten the full extent of Kaunitz's relations with the favorite, her denial of any personal correspondence must be accepted as conclusive.¹ Louis himself, too, was always jealous of the claims of others to the credit of the new policy. The alliance, he insisted, was his work, and his alone.²

The treaty of Westminster and the treaty of Versailles completed the rupture of the old system, and substituted one that seemed condemned by all the lessons of history. For two hundred years the houses of France and Austria had regarded themselves as mortal enemies. Through all the vicissitudes of the long struggle over the balance of power in Europe, — whether Francis the First is revolting in just alarm at the enormous increase of the imperial power in the hands of the Hapsburgs, or Richelieu and Mazarin are supporting the Protestants in the Thirty Years' War, or grand alliances are formed to resist the aggressions of Louis the Fourteenth, or the hereditary dominions of Maria Theresa are attacked

The diplomatic revolution.

¹ Ranke, *Sämmtliche Werke*, xxx. 268. Cf. Schaefer, i. 114. The letter of the empress-queen was written in 1763, and was addressed to the electress of Saxony.

² Louis XV. to count Broglie, 22 January, 1757. *Corresp. secrète*, i. 216, or Stühr, i. 41.

by half the powers of Europe, — in all phases of the conflict of arms and the conflict of diplomacy, the rivalry of these two great states seemed a natural and necessary fact, a part of the unwritten law of Europe. For nearly a century, too, the alliance of the naval powers with Austria, made necessary by the disproportionate growth of the power of France and the ambitious designs of its rulers or statesmen, had been a factor not less prominent and powerful. Nor can it be denied that these combinations served at many epochs the real interests of Europe. I am no friend of formulæ or phrases: the principle of the balance of power has covered as wicked enterprises as can be found in the history of the world. But it is clear that the policy of Richelieu in lending the aid of France to the Protestant states against the house of Austria, and the policy of Austria in joining a Protestant alliance against the fatal pretensions of Louis the Fourteenth, were alike serviceable to the independence of Europe, and may be defended by the same lines of reasoning. The impartial historian can commend Francis the First, Henry the Fourth, and the two great cardinals at an earlier stage, and William the Third, Eugene of Savoy, Heinsius and Marlborough at a later, without any inconsistency, any sacrifice of logic to prejudice, any undue respect for the catch-words of diplomacy. And now the rivalry of France and Austria, which had saved the balance of power, and the union of the naval powers with Austria, which had made that rivalry efficient, were alike suspended, and a new system was introduced in Europe. The United Provinces retreated before the coming storm, and took refuge behind a timid though prudent neutrality. England sought elsewhere for the help which the court of Vienna refused or delayed to promise. Finally Austria and France laid aside their enmities, clasped hands in friendship, and completed the diplomatic revolution. And of all this the explanation is to be sought in the sudden rise of Prussia.

A state which, less than a score of years before, the old dynasties still regarded as a power of the second rank, as one of several principalities which were useful as auxiliaries and for making up grand military leagues, but had no independent policy or position, and were not to be feared as principals, — this state, lifted in two brief wars to a level with the most ancient empires of Europe, could now survey, as its own work, the ruins of a grand system of international politics which dated back nearly to the time when the Hohenzollerns first set foot in the Mark of Brandenburg.

CHAPTER IX.

OUTBREAK OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

EVENTS now moved forward rapidly toward the crisis. The conclusion of the treaty of Versailles enabled Kaunitz to adopt a tone of indifference in the ^{Austria to} ^{England.} answer which he finally gave to Keith's demand for his opinion of the convention of neutrality with Prussia, and for an explanation of the Austrian policy at Paris. His mistress regretted, he said, that England had made a treaty which left the Netherlands open to attack by France, and gave her no security against attack from Prussia; still she hoped it would yield his Britannic majesty all the advantages expected from it. Maria Theresa herself, of whom the envoy obtained an audience on the thirteenth of May, while the signed copy of the treaty of Versailles, duly ratified by Louis, was in her possession, gave an answer scarcely more explicit, and not at all more satisfactory. She neither denied, nor explained, nor excused the negotiations with France. She simply insisted that the treaty made by England with Prussia restored her own freedom of action, and gave her the right to form such alliances as her own interests might dictate. She also made a significant allusion to the intimate union between the two imperial courts.¹ This attitude of the empress was in strict accordance with Frederic's own predictions. In an interview only a day or two before, he said he was well informed that a convention was framing between Austria

¹ Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 328-333; Ranke, xxx. 189, 190; Hist. MSS. Com., 3d report, Lansdowne papers.

and France, but the court of Vienna was greatly embarrassed in what manner to answer the instances which Mr. Keith had lately been directed to make; that the intention was to shift giving any answer till the convention was actually signed; and so to justify its conduct by the manner in which England had conducted itself in the negotiation of the treaty with Prussia.¹

Keith's report of his conversations naturally suggested to the English ministers the attitude which they
England's
reply. took when the treaty of Versailles, of course without the secret articles, was laid before them by count Colleredo. "We understand it," said Granville to the Austrian ambassador, "only as a treaty of neutrality, and can but be glad of it: the people in general look upon it otherwise; and I fear a time will come when it may be right for us, and may be our inclination, to assist your mistress again, but the prepossessions against her will be too strong; nobody will then dare to be a lord Granville." In the same strain Holdernesse wrote to Keith of the ingratitude of Austria and the folly of her infatuated minister.²

At Paris, on the first day of June, the minister Rouillé
Unconcern
of Frederic. read the text of the treaty to the foreign envoys, without permitting them to copy it. But Knyp-
 hausen procured a copy surreptitiously, and forwarded it to Berlin, with his own comments. He took a melancholy pride in the exactness with which it corresponded to his own predictions; and added that "the excessive fear which the French court had of becoming involved in a war by land, a thing dreaded by the Pompadour and her party beyond all expression, was the sole motive for the treaty."³ Frederic in his reply offered no opposition to this view. Even though he suspected the existence of secret

¹ Report of the English envoy. *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 328.

² H. Walpole, *Geo. II.*, ii. 220; Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 343; Michell, 8 June, 1756, *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 430.

³ Knyphausen, 4 June, 1756, *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 412, 413.

articles, he was apprehensive of nothing more serious than a new scheme to make the archduke Joseph king of the Romans.¹

Three days later Knyphausen returned to the subject in another long report. The new alliance was extremely repugnant, he said, not indeed to the Knyphausen's views. dominant party in the council of ministers, but to all those who were best able to foresee its consequences. Count d'Argenson could not see without chagrin the establishment of a system which robbed him of all his influence, and condemned his own department, that of war, to complete inaction. There was already talk of reducing the army, and using the money thus saved for the augmentation of the fleet. It was certain that the Pompadour's dislike of D'Argenson, and her ardent preference for his rival in the council, had much to do with the creation of the new system, which ought to be regarded only as a court intrigue, formed with the object of keeping the king engaged in debauchery, to which a war by land would put an end, and of increasing the power of Machault at the cost of the count d'Argenson. Marshal Belleisle and the officers of the army were furious. With the prospect that the war would be confined to the high seas, they saw disappear all the hopes of promotion which they had fondly cherished; and they were supported in their protests by men who stood very near the throne. The envoys of some of the smaller German powers also expressed alarm, according to Knyphausen, lest the alliance should prove to be a scheme of the court of Vienna for overthrowing the independence of the Empire, by the aid of the power which had hitherto been its principal defender.²

¹ Frederic to Knyphausen and Michell, 15 June, 1756. When Valori submitted a copy of the treaty by Rouillé's orders on the 19th of June, Frederic expressed no dissatisfaction. Valori, ii. 78; cf. *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 414.

² Knyphausen, 7 June, 1756. *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 424, 425.

French victory in the Mediterranean.

In the mean time the French began active operations with unexpected vigor, and while the diplomats were studying the treaty of Versailles won a brilliant double victory in the Mediterranean. Masking their real purpose by feigned preparations for a descent upon the coast of England, they hastily equipped a combined military and naval expedition for the capture of the island of Minorca; entrusted the direction of the land forces to the duke of Richelieu, the friend of Voltaire and madame de Pompadour, the most daring libertine of Paris society; and put a veteran sailor, admiral La Gallissonnière, in command of the fleet. The troops were safely landed on the eighteenth of April. A month later an English squadron, which under admiral Byng tardily appeared on the scene, was defeated by La Gallissonnière. On the twenty-seventh of June Richelieu ordered an assault upon the fortress of Port Mahon, which was carried after a short but desperate struggle; and the whole island fell into the hands of the French. The consternation in England was great. The unlucky Byng was recalled in disgrace, only to be burned in effigy by the populace; to be put on trial for a misfortune which was not wholly his own; and in the end to suffer an ignominious death, in order, as Voltaire said, to encourage his brother admirals. The wretched ministry of the duke of Newcastle, long odious to the country, was shaken to its very foundations. Nor could the allies of England, among whom Prussia was the foremost, look with unconcern upon this inauspicious beginning of a war which might soon take them into its deadly embrace.

Attitude of Russia.

It was not, however, from the side of France that Frederic apprehended danger, but from the side of Russia. He had not bribed Menzel and Weingarten in vain; and though the treachery of the latter was discovered about this time, and one source of supply was thus cut off, Menzel continued active, and other se-

cret agents contributed according to their means.¹ But from them Frederic learned only a part of the truth. He did not learn that Esterhazy had sent to Vienna, on the twenty-second of April, a detailed project of the court of St. Petersburg for immediate hostilities against Prussia and the partition of that kingdom among its strong and feeble neighbors; that Kaunitz, replying just a month later, had only objected that the plan could not be put into execution before the next year, and after the reconciliation of France with Russia; and that negotiations to that end were still in active progress.² The assurances given by Elizabeth to Esterhazy, the conditions attached to her ratification of the English treaty, her unwillingness to accept the first subsidy, the angry reproaches addressed to Williams, the discredit into which Bestuschef had fallen for still supporting the alliance with England, — these were unknown to Frederic; for they were naturally secret and confidential, and eluded the vigilance of his agents. The English ministers, too, gave him little aid in the solution of the dark problem. While Frederic was wrestling with the mysterious reports sent in by Klinggraeffen and Maltzahn; with the hints secretly conveyed by the grand-duke Peter, and the friendly communications made by Dutch diplomatists, England long concealed from her ally what she knew of the changed and menacing tone of the court of St. Petersburg. It is impossible to deny that there is some force in the charges which in this connection the Prussian historians bring against the ministers of George the Second.³

The policy of deception, or optimism, was carried out

¹ See a partial list of these in Huschberg, *Die drei Kriegsjahre 1756-1758*, edited by H. Wuttke, Leipsic, 1856, pp. lxx., lxxi.

² Arneth, iv. 460, 461; Ranke, xxx. 195. In the partition Austria was to have Silesia and Glatz; Poland, Preussen, in exchange for cessions of Polish territory to Russia; Saxony, the territory of Magdeburg; and Sweden, the province of Pomerania.

³ See e. g. Schaefer, i. 146, 147.

by one to whom it must have been grossly repulsive, the new minister of England at the Prussian court. Sir Andrew Mitchell. Sir Andrew Mitchell was a Scotch baronet of good family and good education. Bred to the profession of the law, and filled with the spirit of a philosophical jurist, he travelled on the continent, made the acquaintance of Montesquieu, and cultivated the friendship of all liberal and enlightened men. After his return the government wisely took him into the diplomatic service, and sent him to Brussels during the negotiations upon the barrier treaties. The mission to Vienna was next offered him and declined. That to Berlin, when it was finally decided to send a minister thither, he at once accepted, happily for England, for Prussia, and for himself. Among all the envoys and ambassadors who have represented England at the court of Berlin, not one has a higher place in history than this upright, straightforward, and sincere Scotchman. He made a favorable impression on Podelwils in their first interview after his arrival.¹ Frederic received him in audience three days later, and discussed the state of affairs with the utmost frankness. Subsequent conversations only confirmed the king's good opinion of the new envoy.

On one subject alone, the true attitude of Russia, Mitchell's language seems wanting in frankness. More alarm about Russia. He repeatedly assured Frederic that he and his government felt certain of Russia, although he knew that the reports of Williams, if at times contradictory, were on the whole alarming. As late as the twenty-second of June, he took the precaution of omitting from one of those reports, sent to him for communication at Berlin, the passages which would have confirmed the king's suspicions.² Such conduct was, of course, not inconsistent with the theory that England regarded the dis-

¹ 8 May, 1756. Vide *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 319.

² Schaefer, *ubi supra*.

satisfaction at St. Petersburg as a temporary humor, which would soon give way to a revived sense of the value of the English subsidies. Besides, Frederic was not deceived by the English assurances. His own information was not only contrary to that which Holdernessee and Mitchell professed to give, but was in many respects more accurate than that which they withheld. Toward the end of June he received such suspicious documents from the Saxon archives, and such detailed reports about the movements of the Russian troops, that, although he had long believed that hostilities would not begin before the next year, he now felt it necessary to take precautions against an earlier attack.¹ The most precise information about the concentration and westward movement of Russian troops was given by one of Williams' couriers. He passed through Berlin, and there described to Mitchell, and through him to the king, what he saw on the way. The report reached Frederic on the nineteenth of July, and Mitchell admitted that the outlook was bad.²

The letters and the orders of Frederic during the next fortnight reflect this more sombre view of the situation. He instructed the Silesian authorities Measures of precaution. to prepare for an increase of the frontier garrisons. Notice was sent to several commanders of regiments to be ready for marching orders at any moment. Field-marshal Keith was recalled from Carlsbad, where he was taking the waters. The furloughs of other officers were revoked. Full instructions were sent to marshal Lehwaldt, who commanded in the province of Preussen, for the event of an invasion; and he was even given authority to negotiate terms of peace in case the Russians, being defeated in battle, should make overtures to him. To support Lehwaldt a reserve was assembled in the Pomeranian fortress of Cöslin. Mitchell reported that notwith-

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 402, 419, 420, etc.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 427, 428.

standing the great number of enemies, the king seemed in no wise disconcerted, and had already given such orders that in a fortnight's time he would be ready to act.¹

It was conjectured that the enemy would make the attack, when all was ready, in three separate columns. One Austrian army would enter Prussia from Bohemia by way of Saxony, reënforced, perhaps, by a Saxon contingent. A second would penetrate into Upper Silesia from Moravia, and be joined by the Russian force lying near Smolensk. The main Russian army was destined to make an easy conquest of Preussen.² But Frederic here describes not so much a plan actually formed — for the negotiations between the two imperial courts had not yet descended to military details — as a plan which the character of the country, and the common rules of strategy, would necessarily impose upon the allied enemies of his kingdom. He knew, too, that the Austrians were not ready to take the lead in hostilities. From that direction only slight military movements were reported, plans for the concentration of troops in August, and measures, which might form part of an eventual scheme of action but were not immediately dangerous.³ Hence in Silesia he was satisfied to urge increased watchfulness, to put the dépôts of supplies in good condition, and slightly to increase the principal garrisons. Nothing like a general mobilization was ordered.

In the direction of Russia the outlook was more seri-

¹ Frederic to the minister Schlabrendorf at Breslau, 19 June, to general von Quadt, 21 June, to the margravine of Bayreuth, 22 June, to Keith, 23 June; instructions for field-marshal Lehwaldt at Königsberg, 23 June; Mitchell's report, 23 June, 1756, etc., etc. The English envoy's reports of his interviews and conversations with Frederic are properly included in the Political Correspondence by the editor.

² Frederic to Knyphausen, 19 June, 1756.

³ Klinggræffen, 12 June, 1756. *Polit. Corresp.*, xii. 440; Frederic to Knyphausen, 22 June, 1756.

ous, and suggested the urgent orders issued to Lehwaldt. The diplomacy of Frederic followed the same impulse. In a long autograph memorandum prepared for the English envoy he practically gave up all hope that Russia could be saved, and urged the necessity of making the treaty of Westminster the basis of a new system. This treaty, he said, — a tardy but significant admission, — was the starting point of the sudden change which had taken place in the political combinations of Europe. Count Kaunitz had hastened to make it a pretext for his own rival treaty of Versailles, and for the schemes which he was now urging upon the court of Russia. In the empire he was exciting the Catholic princes against England and Prussia in the name of the church of Rome. But Prussia, having risked everything in her treaty with England, had a right to expect from her ally a frank recognition of the new situation, and an earnest coöperation in measures of mutual defence. As such were suggested an attempt to excite Turkey against the two imperial courts; an alliance with Denmark and Holland; and a league of the German princes hostile to Austria. "Germany is menaced by grave dangers," concludes this striking paper. "Prussia sees herself confronted by a great war, but is not disheartened. Three things can reëstablish the balance of Europe: a close union of the two courts, earnest efforts to form new alliances, and courage to meet all dangers that may arise."¹

Frederic's
exhortation
to England.

The answer to this Spartan appeal was almost of the nature of an anti-climax. England renewed indeed the promise already given to send a fleet into the Baltic, if it should become necessary, for the protection of the Prussian coasts. The plan of bribing Bestuschef in behalf of the Anglo-Prussian alliance was adopted on Frederic's proposal. Then in the same in-

The re-
sponse.

¹ *Mémoire raisonné sur la situation présente de l'Allemagne*, 28 June, 1756.

terview, in which he gave these glowing assurances, Mitchell laid before Frederic, by the tardy order of his government, the Russian declaration that the subsidy treaty was binding only against Prussia. The king "read it over unmoved," adds the envoy, "and observed with great calmness, that it made our treaty with Russia quite useless."¹

About this there could be no doubt. But in these days there came reports which let in a ray of light upon the general darkness, and gave Frederic a precious interval for preparation. It was learned that the Russian armaments had been suspended, and that the force lately on the march toward Preussen was returning to winter quarters in the interior.²

The reasons for this sudden change of plan were unknown at Berlin. It might be that the army had retired from Livonia, where it had expected to remain until called into action, because that country was too poor to support it. The retreat might be a victory of Bestuschef and Williams over Woronzof and the Austrian party; and there were other theories equally plausible, but equally unsubstantiated. It is now understood, however, that the retrograde movement was a concession to the more cautious and more crafty policy of Kaunitz.³ That policy was not to attack Prussia at present if Prussia could be provoked to attack Austria.⁴ It had a twofold advantage. If Frederic should begin the

Recall of
the Russian
troops.

Reasons
for this
measure.

¹ Mitchell's report of his audience of the 6th July, 1756. The declarations made by him on this occasion were logically, though not chronologically, an answer to the *Mémoire raisonné*, which only summed up in categorical form, as it were, views which Frederic had repeatedly pressed upon the English court.

² The first rumor to this effect reached Frederic on the third or fourth of July. Cf. Eichel to Finckenstein, 4 July, 1756.

³ Cf. Ranke, xxx. 196 and n. i; Bestuschef to Williams, October, 1756, apud Raumer, *Beitrage*, ii. 406; Stühr, i. 46, 47.

⁴ Klinggræffen, 10 July; Keith, July, apud Raumer, ii. 863; Flemming to Brühl, 7 July, 1756.

war he would begin it with the moral inequality which belongs to the aggressor in a quarrel; and he would create the *casus fœderis*, which would give the empress-queen a right to exact the assistance of France. But if Frederic should refuse to give the desired pretext, the Austrians could use the interval, while the Russians were held in reserve, in massing their own troops in Bohemia, and in pushing the negotiations for changing the defensive alliance with France into an offensive one, as the treaty of May seemed to contemplate.¹ These negotiations were also in the hands of count Stahremberg and the abbé Bernis.

The principal demand of the French was, as Stahremberg had foreseen, that instead of the cession of a part of the Austrian Netherlands to Don Philip, the whole should be ceded to France.

Further negotiations at Paris.

Their value in money was offered in payment. Don Philip was to receive compensation elsewhere, and Austria was to receive, as first proposed, his three Italian duchies. But the value of these was to be deducted from the sum to be paid by France for the Netherlands. To justify these large demands Bernis urged, in opposition to the Austrian view, that as Silesia and Glatz had been formally ceded by treaty, they must now be regarded as a complete possession of Prussia. Their annexation to Austria would be, in effect, the conquest of new territory, and France could not give support to such a scheme without rewards more liberal than any yet offered.²

The cession of the Netherlands was at once accepted in principle by the ministers of the conference, when the report of Stahremberg was laid before them. Not Kaunitz alone, but all the others — Uhlfeld,

Austrian propositions.

¹ Kaunitz to Esterhazy, 22 May, 1756, apud Huschberg-Wuttke, *Die drei Kriegsjahre*, pp. lxx., lxxvi.; Arneth, iv. 460, 461.

² Arneth, iv. 445-448. The ambassador reports these demands under date 13 May, 1756.

Colloredo, Khevenhüller, and Batthyany — recommended the sacrifice.¹ But their assent was given only on certain conditions, which Kaunitz drew up in a report to the emperor, and afterwards embodied in formal instructions to Stahremberg. The most important of these were that Brabant and Flanders should be assigned to Don Philip, and that the cession of the rest to France should not take effect until Silesia and Glatz were actually again in the possession of Austria. It was hoped also that France would consent to the extortion from Prussia of something more than the original Austrian provinces, that Saxony also would be promised an increase of territory, and that subsidies would be offered to Russia and other eventual members of the league, besides those already pledged to the empress-queen herself.²

When the Austrian counterpropositions reached Versailles the consent of Louis was given without much difficulty to the form in which Kaunitz offered to cede the Netherlands. Those districts which had formerly belonged to France were to be restored absolutely, but the rest was to go in the first instance to Don Philip, with only a contingent reversion to the French crown. It was agreed that the cession should not become binding until the full restoration of Silesia and Glatz to Austria. The chief opposition of Bernis was to the demands that Prussia should be further dismembered to enrich Austria, Saxony, and others, and that France should actively coöperate in an offensive war against Frederic. But Louis finally yielded, in the middle of August, on both these points.³ It was undoubtedly a proof of Maria

Louis accepts them.

¹ 23 May 1756. Arneth, iv. 450.

² Ibid. pp. 450-455. The instruction was dated 9 June, 1756. Ranke has some further details and some just reflections on this stage of the negotiations. *Sämmt. Werke*, xxx. 197-200. Cf. Huschberg-Wuttke, pp. lxiii., lxiv.

³ Arneth, iv. 464-473; Ranke, xxx. 200-205.

Theresa's thirst for revenge on Prussia that she was willing to sacrifice the Netherlands to satisfy it; yet the concessions which Louis was willing to make — concessions which, as Bernis declared, were grossly repugnant to him — show not less clearly the great advantage given to the diplomacy of Kaunitz by the treaty of Westminster. The consciousness of strength, of superior political resources, of the advantage of position, which favorably distinguishes the diplomacy of Kaunitz from that of Rouillé, will not escape any reader who studies the history of these negotiations.

The conclusion of a final treaty, based on the concessions mutually made, was, however, frustrated by the new turn given to affairs by the action of the king of Prussia. Frederic had only a vague knowledge of the negotiations which were in progress at Versailles. The reports of Knyphausen were misleading, for while the envoy condemned the whole later course of Frederic's diplomacy, and had correctly predicted the ill-feeling which it would cause in France, he still doubted the possibility of an offensive alliance between the houses of Bourbon and Hapsburg. The confidence which France before had in the king of Prussia, he wrote, though sometimes shaken, had been completely restored at the time of Nivernois' mission, and then abruptly destroyed by the treaty with England. The little respect shown to France in that transaction had entirely alienated the ministry and all the nation. Louis had been hurt beyond description; it was certain that without that treaty the system just established, which had been rejected in 1751 and later, would never have been adopted. The Pompadour regarded Frederic as a bold and enterprising prince, whose alliance was to be dreaded by France, if only because it was not favorable to peace. Others alluded to the many occasions in which he had betrayed France, and argued that no treaty with him could have any value. Even

Stern truths
from Knyphausen.

Belleisle was silenced by the convention of Westminster. But the envoy still adhered to his opinion that the object of the treaty of Versailles, so far as France was concerned, was the maintenance of peace on the land.¹

There can, I think, be little doubt that the motives here
Motives of
Pompadour. attributed to madame de Pompadour were the true ones. She probably desired a general European war less than almost any other person at the French court, because a general war seemed fatal to her whole scheme or system of power. She looked with uneasiness upon the alliance with Prussia because she was in constant fear, so long as it lasted, that Frederic's ardent nature and ambitious plans would again lead Louis into dangerous enterprises, give the military party an ascendancy at Versailles, and end the reign of ease and indolence, on which she felt her authority to depend. For this reason she rejoiced when Frederic voluntarily cut loose from the French connection. The same line of thought led her to support the alliance between France and Austria. It was hoped that the loss of her ancient ally, and the appearance of so formidable a combination, would make England hesitate to embark in the struggle, and preserve the peace of Europe. Thus, in the Pompadour's view dissipation and debauchery would remain the chief occupation of the king of France, and her own power would stand unshaken. How woefully the base schemer was deceived it did not take her long to learn. But if Knyphausen's version of her motives was correct, the old and almost universally accepted theory, which describes her as infuriated by Frederic's conduct, and revengefully organizing a plot for his destruction, will have to be abandoned.

The fact that one part of the history of this period has thus to be rewritten ought not, however, to cause much surprise to those who are familiar with Frederic's character, and will reflect upon the probable nature of his feel-

¹ Knyphausen, 2 July ; Frederic to Knyphausen, 17 July, 1756.

ings toward madame de Pompadour. Undoubtedly he regarded her with contempt. But this contempt was intellectual rather than moral, and not of a kind therefore to make it likely that he would hesitate to use her services whenever they could be used to advantage. He employed other instruments quite as disreputable. He adopted expedients which, to a person of delicate scruples, would have been not less offensive than the solicitation of a depraved woman, who happened to have an immense power for good and evil. These things were generally known; and the theory that Frederic, in obedience to a lofty sense of virtue, had refused to purchase peace and safety by the display of common civility toward madame de Pompadour ought always to have been regarded with suspicion. Nor is this the only consideration. It must also be borne in mind that the standard of conduct which prevailed in the age of Frederic made it possible for an upright and even austere prince or statesman to address himself to persons of influence, whose antecedents or character would to-day exclude them from public recognition. Elizabeth, empress of Russia, was not a pattern of the virtues; yet no state declared non-intercourse because she was corrupt and depraved. Many a modest English matron has doubtless read with horror that Maria Theresa wrote letters to the Pompadour, and with delight that Frederic scorned to use so base an instrument, in blessed ignorance of my lord Hervey's memoirs, that ghastly picture of manners and morals at the court of George the Second, with sir Robert Walpole bargaining for the aid of Mrs. Howard, and queen Caroline, a pure, and in many respects noble woman, helping her own husband to choose a suitable mistress. Even madame de Pompadour was first lady of the palace to the queen of France. With such a state of things diplomacy had to deal; and Frederic would have received little sympathy from his contemporaries in any troubles brought upon him by his own too fastidious respect for propriety.

Yet in spite of Knyphausen's theory about the motives of the Pompadour, the consolation which he had Austrian armaments. to offer was slight enough, and was mingled with truths which made even Frederic wince. And while the outlook from Paris grew no brighter, the Austrian armaments were evidences of danger which it was forbidden to ignore. If the preparations of Russia had been apparently suspended, those of Austria were pushed with the greater energy. Camps were forming in Bohemia and Moravia. The reports which Frederic received left no doubt that eighty thousand Austrians, and a still larger number of Russians, would be ready to invade Prussia early in the coming year. In dispatches of the third, the seventh, and the twelfth of July, Klinggræffen gave very precise details of the Austrian plans; and though some of them rested on rumor alone, others were confirmed by the evidence of eye-witnesses from the frontier districts. An immense stock of heavy guns, two hundred and sixty-eight in number, not counting the field artillery, was to be formed at Olmütz. Each regiment of foot had orders to prepare a million cartridges. The battalions were filling up with recruits. Large numbers of men were engaged in building bridges and repairing roads; in making caissons, wagons, and pontoons; in enlarging the magazines of supplies. The prince of Liechtenstein was destined for the chief command, with marshals Browne and Daun as his lieutenants. All these arrangements were indeed only provisional, for no marching orders had as yet been issued to the regiments. But everybody at Vienna felt that action was certain as soon as Russia was ready. The emperor, the French ambassador, Kaunitz, and Neipperg were eager for war, and were urging the empress to seize her opportunity.¹

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 80, 81; Hertzberg, *Recueil*, i. 141. Even these details, Frederic thought, fell short of the actual facts. To Klinggræffen, 17 July, 1756.

The information which the king received was made known promptly to his brothers, to sir Andrew Mitchell, to Schwerin and other high officers.¹ The prospects of war were freely discussed. But it was still a war to begin by the act of Prussia's enemies, not the act of Prussia; a war which Prussia was to meet by resistance, not provoke by attack. The few military dispositions which were made by Frederic in the first half of July seemed purely defensive. The concentration of a small reserve in Pomerania, at a time when Preussen was threatened with Russian invasion, the orders for putting the fortresses of Silesia in a condition to meet attack, and the recall of officers absent on leave, were inadequate measures for a war of aggression, and gave the empress-queen no cause for alarm or offence.²

This was the outward appearance of affairs. Yet it is probable that Frederic had formed early in July a plan of action essentially different from ^{Frederic's plan.} that which his own letters described, and which his visible preparations seemed to suggest. This was a plan to anticipate, not to await, the attack of his enemies. He understood clearly his own resources, both political and military. The fatal documents obtained from the Saxon archives would enable him to show the world that the two imperial courts had planned the ruin of Prussia; and that he could not justly be accused of provoking a war undertaken only to prevent the plans of his enemies. In this line of reasoning when used by Frederic there were indeed certain obvious defects. If he were concerned only about his reputation with posterity he ought to have re-

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, vols. xii. and xiii. passim.

² Thus in substance Frederic to Maltzahn, 17 July, 1756, and in many other letters during this period. Of the four "armed camps" which Arneth, iv. 374, mentions as causing alarm at Vienna, three had not even been ordered, and the fourth was that of Cöslin. Cf. Cogniazo, *Geständnisse*, i. 215.

flected that in judging the general rectitude of his purposes the world would look at his career as a whole, at his policy in the first and second Silesian wars, and not merely at his position in 1756, as the intended victim of a coalition of powers, one or two of which he had grossly offended. Or, again, his was not an age when military alliances were governed by the rules of moral justice, and when he could expect his physical resources to be at all increased by the strength of his logical position. It does not appear that all the labored attempts to vindicate the righteousness of his cause gained him a single soldier or any advantage whatever. But the military interest which he had in choosing his own time for opening the struggle is far clearer. He was ready and his enemies were not. A sudden challenge might frighten them into pledges which would make him secure for a considerable time to come; or, if they preferred the chances of war, a single campaign might force them to a satisfactory peace.¹

The day on which Frederic finally adopted this plan of action it is impossible definitely to fix. It is His confidants. probable that he had revolved it in his mind all through the month of July, and perhaps earlier, but had delayed putting it into execution, hoping that some unforeseen event or circumstance would remove the danger which threatened to make it necessary. The persons to whom he confided it as a possibility were few. Ranke names only Eichel and Winterfeldt. Schaefer adds marshal Schwerin and others. But it is agreed that Winterfeldt was admitted deeper than any other into the secret, and that he was an ardent advocate of an offensive policy. More clearly, perhaps, than any other general officer he represented Frederic's own views of the value of audacity, alike in politics and in war. But unlike Frederic he loved war for its own sake, for its excitement, its eagerness, its strenuous energies, for its opportunities to display individ-

¹ See *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iv. 37, 38.

ual valor and win enduring fame; and all his great influence was used in hastening the day of action.¹

Dates are here of some importance, and the seventeenth of July may be taken as the actual opening of the crisis. On that day and in consequence of ^{Troops to the front.} fresh reports from Dresden, Frederic ordered three Westphalian regiments to be put in order for field service, and to depart within a week for a military camp near Halberstadt.²

The reports of Klinggraeffen led to corresponding diplomatic steps at Vienna. The envoy was ordered ^{First inquiry at Vienna.} to demand a special audience of the empress-queen, and to ask whether the armaments in Bohemia and Moravia were making with the design of attacking Prussia. If the empress should reply that they were mere measures of precaution required by the military activity of the king of Prussia himself, the envoy was to explain that Prussian troops had been concentrated only in Pomerania, with a view to meeting an apprehended attack by Russia, and gave no reason for alarm at Vienna. If she should say that every one had a right to do as he pleased in his own house, the answer was to be noted and nothing said. And if it should be explained that only the ordinary annual manœuvres were contemplated, Klinggraeffen was ordered to point out the unusual number of troops assembled, and the unusual preparations made, and to ask if that was the only answer.³ By the king's orders this in-

¹ Cf. Varnhagen von Ense, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, xii. 64, 65.

² Frederic to general von Quadt, 17 July, 1756. Dr. Naudé, in an article in the *Hist. Zeitschrift*, vol. lvi. pp. 411 et seq., fixes on the sixteenth as the day on which the plan was formed in the king's own mind, that being the day on which he received news that Hungarian regiments were marching into Bohemia. Some of the interpretations which this writer puts upon Frederic's utterances at this time seem to me somewhat forced and artificial.

³ Frederic to Klinggraeffen, 18 July, 1756. This is the date of the dispatch of the instructions. But they were prepared, and their dispatch ordered the day before. Cf. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 89.

struction was communicated to Mitchell, to the end that England might fully understand his course.¹

It was doubtless mainly out of deference to Mitchell, and the English government, that Frederic took this step. As an Austrian historian justly observes, he could hardly have expected Maria Theresa, if she had the intentions which rumor ascribed to her, and which this measure itself assumed to exist, to give them up in consequence of a mere inquiry. Nor, on the other hand, was she likely to gratify the curiosity of the king of Prussia, and thus put a powerful moral weapon in his hands, by frankly confessing a plan which she had pursued with the greatest patience, and every effort at concealment.² If she had been ready, she might have thrown off the mask, and let the result of her arms vindicate the justice of her cause. But she was not ready. She had an object in gaining time, and could give only an evasive answer, while Frederic's policy was to strike at once, if war should seem inevitable, and thus anticipate his tardy enemies. Delay was therefore to this extent disadvantageous to him; and the only reasonable theory of a step which involved delay is that he desired to meet the scruples of England, and put himself right before the world. The further contention of Arneth, that Frederic never really intended to make his course depend on the nature of the Austrian response, seems to be less conclusive. It is contradicted by the whole tenor of his correspondence at this time.

Two days after the dispatch of this important letter Frederic received from the Hague more precise and more alarming news than he had yet had about the plans of the two imperial courts. It was furnished by colonel Yorke, the English resident. The substance was that Russia and France were again drawing together, with a view to perfecting their respec-

Prævenire
quam
præveniri.

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 92.

² Arneth, iv. 480, 481.

tive alliances with Austria; and that Prussia was to be attacked the following spring by the combined armies of Maria Theresa and Elizabeth, the former eighty and the latter one hundred and twenty thousand strong.¹ This report made a profound impression on Frederic. He had interviews on the same day and the next with Mitchell, and discussed with him the measures which it might be advisable to take in case war should actually break out. "When I urged," says Mitchell in his report of these audiences, "that perhaps the motions of his troops here, and the reports that had been spread in consequence of them, might so have alarmed the court of Vienna as to make them send these extraordinary succors into Bohemia and Moravia to prevent his invading of them, the king of Prussia said they knew well enough that he had no such intention² . . . that all that he had yet done was to march eleven or twelve battalions into Pomerania . . . that hitherto not a single man has been sent into Silesia, and all he had yet done was to order the palisades to be placed, and the cannon to be mounted in the fortified places in that country. All this I believe is strictly true," pursues the cautious English envoy; "yet he has made such a disposition as in fourteen days to be able to send forty thousand men into Silesia, which will make upwards of ninety thousand with the troops already there."³ The measures which were taken and

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 95, 96. Yorke obtained his information from the reports of Swart, and perhaps in part from Golowkin, Russian envoy at the Hague. The latter, like his colleague Keyserlingk of Vienna, was opposed to the new policy of Russia.

² Kaunitz admitted this confidentially to Flemming, as appears in the latter's report to Brühl, 7 July, 1756, which Maltzahn forwarded from Dresden on the 24th.

³ Mitchell, 23 July, 1756, in *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 97 et seq. "All this," though essentially, was not "strictly true," for it makes no mention of the orders to general Quadt and the camp near Halberstadt. Vide p. 293. It is also possible that the "disposition" of which Mitchell speaks was generally known to the diplomatists at Berlin,

the views which were expressed by Frederic from this time onward are distinctly and significantly warlike.¹ To Mitchell he wrote two days after this conversation that he thought it better to anticipate his enemies than to await their attack.²

It is still an open question whether such a course was wise, and whether the advice of England, though born perhaps of fear, could not have been followed more safely. That Austria and Russia were planning an attack seemed indeed certain. But it was probable that the attack was not intended to take place before the coming year, and in the interval many circumstances might arise to prevent it. Prompt victories by England over France, the overthrow of the hostile party at Versailles, the power of English money or a new palace revolution at St. Petersburg, the accession of other powers to the treaty of Westminster, the rupture of the supplementary negotiations between Austria and France, these were events or forces, any one of which might break up the gathering clouds, and change the whole aspect of affairs. As yet, too, the alliance of Louis and Maria Theresa was only defensive. The one measure which would make it active, and call the troops of France into the field, was an attack by Frederic upon Austria. Was it, then, prudent to create this very situation in order to anticipate a danger which was still remote and contingent? Even if morally just, was it politically wise?

These questions were raised by Podewils, and answered by him in the negative; he held Frederic's policy to be reckless, calculated only to strengthen the hostile coalition, and, even if momentarily successful,

and was reported to Vienna by count Puebla, the imperial envoy. Cf. Holderness to Mitchell, 13 July, in Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 364.

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 108, 109, 110, etc.

² Il ne me reste plus que *prevenir* quam *preveniri*. Frederic to Mitchell, 24 July, 1756. Cf. *Œuvres de Frédéric*, iv. 37.

likely to end in disaster. In an audience on the twenty-first of July, directly after that of Mitchell, he stated his doubts with a frankness and a courage which only a deep sense of the gravity of the crisis could have awakened, but which he said were required by his duty as a true and faithful servant of the king. Frederic showed some impatience at Podewils' reluctance to believe the many flying rumors about the plans of Austria. Whereupon "I again took the liberty to point out to his majesty the terrible consequences that would ensue if we should rashly take the aggressive, and thus force France and Russia to enter the field a year sooner than their treaties required. It would be better to take the benefit of time; to strengthen the Prussian party within and without the Empire; to secure German troops by the aid of English subsidies; to make new efforts to reconcile France and England; to await the many eventualities, which in the interval might give a more favorable turn to affairs; and to collect a formidable force in Silesia for use in case the worst should arrive. . . . It was probable that if the king should persist in the opposite plan the first results would be brilliant. But the present combination of enemies was unlike anything known in the two previous wars, and would perhaps recall to his mind some day the views which I now presented to him for the last time."¹ But these earnest appeals failed to make any impression, and Podewils was coldly dismissed with the remark that his counsels were those of a timid politician.²

Mitchell had no better success when in an audience five days later he again urged, by the renewed order of his court, the reasons for patience and moderation. In reply Frederic was able to show the envoy, in the form of a report from Knyphausen, a

Of Mitchell
and Knyphausen.

¹ Podewils to Eichels, 22 July, 1756, a touching and interesting letter.

² Adieu ! Monsieur de la timide politique.

fairly correct account of the supplementary negotiations of Versailles.¹ It is true that Knyphausen added his arguments to those of Mitchell and Podewils. He gave the most conclusive reasons for the opinion that if Prussia should begin war she need expect no support from France; the intrigues of Douglas at St. Petersburg were becoming daily more active and suspicious; the armaments of Prussia were warmly denounced at Paris. But to Frederic, with what he knew of the relations between the two imperial courts, the efforts of Austria at Paris were reasons rather for than against action. If France was to join his enemies, it was so much the more important not to await the consummation of their plans. This he explained to Mitchell in the course of the interview. In order to make it impossible for the French to interfere in the struggle that year he would delay his own operations, should they become necessary, until the end of August. He could furnish no troops to England unless she first secured the court of Russia, but he would also expect nothing from England except the fleet for the Baltic. He urged earnest efforts to obtain support from Holland. Joint negotiations were suggested at Copenhagen for the alliance of Denmark.²

Podewils and Mitchell now found an important though an unwelcome ally in the French envoy. On the twenty-sixth of July Valori also had an audience of the king, and gave notice that if Prussia should attack the empress-queen his government would be obliged by its treaty engagements to send troops to her assistance. He had previously handed Podewils a formal note to the same effect. Frederic told the marquis that he would cause Podewils to give a suitable reply; and then proceeded to draft one himself for his minister to sign and deliver. Its tone was haughty, and even defi-

¹ Knyphausen, 15 July, 1756, *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 128-130.

² Mitchell, 30 July, 1756, *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 121-126.

ant. The military measures of Prussia were first explained as mere defensive precautions in view of the Russian and Austrian armaments. A copy of the question to be put by Klinggraeffen at Vienna was enclosed, and the hope expressed that in the future the court of Versailles would give itself the trouble to distinguish between truth and imposture. If rumors had been set afloat that the liberties of the Protestants were in danger, they had a natural origin in the fears aroused by the close union between the principal guarantor of the treaty of Westphalia and the court whose aim had always been to establish its own despotism in the Empire. There was now no question of a Thirty Years' War, or of any of the other false projects which ill-disposed courts had the temerity to put upon the market.¹

The sense of this last passage is made clearer by comparison with that part of Valori's note which called it forth. The envoy wrote that he could not believe that the king had any part in the insinuations, spread abroad by the court of London, that the purely defensive treaty between France and Austria had for its object the destruction of the equilibrium between the Catholic and Protestant powers. Such false and malicious charges, which seemed designed to incite a new war of religions, were the more absurd, he said, since the treaty of Westphalia was expressly made the basis of the treaty of Versailles.

The
religious
element.

The reply of Frederic to this oblique indictment was, as appears, evasive and somewhat ironical. He did not deny, though of course he did not admit, the existence of the rumors, or his own part in circulating them; but he also made no attempt to defend them, if they existed, except by a general reflection upon the novelty of an alliance between France and Austria. To

Frederic's
disclaimer.

¹ Mitchell, *ubi supra*; Frederic to Podewils, 27 July, 1756; *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 133, 134; Valori, *Mémoires*, ii. 121-124.

admit the truth of Valori's charges, even though their diplomatic form exculpated himself, would have made a sacrifice of his ally, and this he could ill afford. To deny that he himself had aided to disseminate the offensive rumors would have been hazardous. He had in fact used every device, or urged the use of every device, at the Hague and at Copenhagen, to make the cause of England and Prussia seem the cause of Protestantism, threatened by a coalition of the Catholic powers.¹ There is no evidence that he seriously viewed the impending conflict in such a light. He well knew, as the reply to Valori plainly shows, that the age of purely religious wars was past.² But he had too openly authorized appeals to the Protestant prejudices of courts where France had many friends, to make it safe to give an absolute denial to the indirect charges of Valori's note. The fear again of such an exposure, or more likely an unwillingness to excite at this time a public quarrel of sects, may explain the king's neglect to cite certain facts, which, though not of great importance, were still of a nature to increase the uneasiness of Protestant princes and statesmen. Such were, the delight of the Holy See over the treaty of Versailles, the activity of the Jesuits at Vienna in support of the new policy, and the intrigues of France at Cassel in behalf of the Catholic heir apparent. From this reserve Frederic subsequently departed. He continued to play on the religious prejudices of the Protestant courts even during the interval between the letter to Valori and the outbreak of hostilities. But, in every shape which they took, his efforts to represent himself as the champion of Protestantism, and his cause that of the Reformation, were unsupported by the evidence of facts, and must be called unsuccessful. The alliance of Austria, Russia, and France was not a Roman Catholic plot. The

¹ Interviews with Mitchell, 20, 21, 26 July, 1756.

² See also Frederic to Knyphausen, 29 June, 1756.

Seven Years' War was not a religious war; and the cause of history gains nothing by attempts to give it such a character.¹

The correspondence with Valori, which is the excuse for this digression, coincides in point of time with the presentation of the Prussian note at Vienna. Reply to the first Prussian inquiry. Klinggraeffen had his audience on the twenty-sixth of July, three days after the arrival of the instructions; so much time, he explained, was required by the formalities of Austrian etiquette. But it was an unfortunate interval. Frederic had intended that his inquiry should find the empress-queen unprepared, and in a situation which might surprise her either into careless admissions or into equally careless pledges. But Kaunitz defeated that purpose by obtaining from Klinggraeffen a statement of the object of the desired audience, and thus gaining time for the preparation of the reply which the empress-queen was to make. When the Prussian envoy was finally admitted to her presence she had, therefore, only to read a written answer to Frederic's carefully framed interrogatories. In the critical state of affairs she had judged it proper, she said, to take measures for her own security and that of her allies, measures which, for the rest, threatened nobody. She then bowed to signify to the envoy that the audience was at an end.²

The report of Klinggraeffen reached Frederic on the second of August, and by his order new instructions were sent to Vienna the same day. These Second Prussian inquiry at Vienna. contained what is known as the second Prussian

¹ Cf. Huschberg-Wuttke, pp. lxxxviii. et seq.; Schlosser, ii. 326; Stühr, i. pp. 59-62.

² Klinggraeffen, 27 July; Flemming to Bruhl, 28 July, 1756, *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 214-216. Flemming's letter has this instructive passage: "On ne doute pas à Vienne que cette réponse aussi énergique qu'obscure n'embarrasse beaucoup le roi de Prusse. . . . On croit cependant que le roi de Prusse aura bien de la peine de détourner la cour de Vienne de son dessein par ces sortes d'illusions."

inquiry. The envoy was directed to ask another special audience of the empress-queen, and to represent to her that neither her own territories nor those of her allies were threatened with invasion. But her majesty should know that the king had been informed in the most positive manner that the two imperial courts had formed, early in the year, an offensive alliance against Prussia, and that their combined forces, two hundred and sixty thousand strong, were to begin the war the coming spring. The Austrian armaments, as they had been reported to Frederic, were then described, and the dispatch concluded: "I think I have a right to ask from the empress a formal and categorical assurance, either in writing, or, if oral, in the presence of the ambassadors of France and England, that she has no intention of attacking me either this year or the year to come. It is necessary to know whether we are at war or at peace. If her intentions are pure, this is the time to make it clear. But if she gives a reply in the style of an oracle, uncertain and ambiguous, the empress will be responsible for any consequences which may ensue."¹

In a postscript Frederic privately gave notice to Klinggraeffen that an unsatisfactory answer from the empress-queen would be the signal for war. And for war he at once prepared. Field-marshal Schwerin, now seventy years old, but full of the fire of youth, received the command of the army in Silesia, the province which, as Frederic felicitously wrote, his sword had helped to conquer. His headquarters were to be at Neisse. The

¹ Frederic to Klinggraeffen, 2 August, 1756. The English envoy Mitchell, in his memoirs, written later, represents that it was at his urgent solicitation that Frederic decided to interrogate the court of Vienna before acting. Vide Schmidt's *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. i. 1844, where Ranke publishes an extract from the memoirs. But the *Polit. Corresp.* has no evidence that such was the case. Besides, the question which he describes as the first was really the second.

original plan of action did not include the participation of Schwerin in an offensive campaign, but only the defence of Silesia against invasion while the other army under the king moved against the enemy. The Austrians were forming two armies, one near Kolin in Bohemia, and one near Olmütz in Moravia. The first was the more formidable; and Frederic proposed that while he was engaging this one, Schwerin should keep the gates of Silesia closed against the other. As soon as the Russians should be ready to move, the marshal was promised reënforcements to meet the new danger.¹ It was conjectured that a part of the Russian forces would take the route through Poland.²

The nucleus of the active army consisted of the regiment von Quadt and the regiment Knobloch, Orders of Frederic. both already in camp, the one near Halberstadt, the other near Hadmersleben. These were directed, on the eleventh of August, to be put in readiness for marching orders. Similar instructions were given two days later to several other commanders, to general von Itzenplitz at Berlin, to prince Ferdinand of Brunswick at Magdeburg, to the duke of Brunswick-Bevern at Stettin. The order to prince Ferdinand is the most detailed, and illustrates better perhaps than any other the Spartan spirit, as well as the extreme minuteness, with which Frederic prepared for the great struggle. The probable duration of the campaign that year was fixed at four months, and on that basis field-money was assigned to the officers. Each company was to have but one baggage wagon. No officer of whatever rank or title, not even a general, was to carry plate with him in the field, or to use at his table anything but tin. Each captain was to provide for his company a

¹ Frederic to Schwerin, 2 August, 1756. Cf. Ranke, xxx. 232. The brigade and division commanders were instructed accordingly. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 177, 178, etc. *

² Frederic to field-marshal Lehwaldt, 7 August, 1756.

small cask of vinegar, and serve it out to the men on the march, the object being to mix a few drops with the water drunk by the soldiers, in neighborhoods where the water was impure, as a precaution against disease.¹ These and other regulations show that Frederic regarded the coming campaign as anything but a holiday parade. He was determined that the officers of the Prussian army should learn, when their duty required, to forego luxuries and live the life of anchorites. Cosmopolitan fops, and rich young nobles in search of adventure, were not likely to seek a service where they had to eat sour cabbage from tin plates, and drink water flavored with acetic acid.

The strength of the forces which he himself could put into the field Frederic knew to a man. In round numbers, Schwerin had about twenty thousand men. The Prussian forces. Lehwaldt could control, including the reserves, perhaps an equal number. The active army to be assembled on the Saxon frontier, under the king himself, was to be at least sixty thousand strong.²

If this were all, the western provinces would be left Situation in the west. nearly unprotected, and the French, when they should appear, be practically unopposed. Frederic himself had few or no troops for service in that quarter, and some of the Hanoverian regiments had been sent to England. Yet, besides the interest which he himself had in his possessions in Westphalia and on the Rhine, his treaty engagements required him to coöperate in the defence of his allies; and their appeals grew daily more urgent as affairs seemed to approach a crisis. The fears of a French invasion of Hanover explain, of course, the efforts of England to dissuade Frederic from taking the

¹ Frederic to prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, 13 August, 1756.

² Mitchell represents Frederic as stating that the forces available for field duty would not reach over 120,000 men. This included an augmentation to the extent of 17,000 made during the summer. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 108 n.

offensive. The reigning duke of Brunswick was not less anxious. There were rumors of a French camp on the Rhine, as a rendezvous for an army destined to march into Westphalia; and Frederic was urged to collect a Prussian force at Wesel. Hanover was in danger; Hesse-Cassel and Brunswick were in danger. All the little courts, whose fortunes were involved with those of England, turned instinctively to the king of Prussia as the one prince whose clear head and strong arm could save them.

Frederic saw the situation in all its gravity. If he was willing to sacrifice temporarily his own western provinces in order to carry out his designs ^{Frederic's advice.} against Austria, it was indeed too much to expect him to arrest those designs in order to defend the dominions and the allies of George the Second. But, in view of the paralysis which reigned in the councils of England, he added to the cares of his own great enterprise that of raising up an army to resist the French in the west. This army was to be composed of a Hanoverian contingent, increased by new levies to take the place of those sent to England; of mercenaries contributed by Hesse-Cassel, Gotha, Darmstadt, Anspach, Brunswick, and other principalities subsidized or to be subsidized from the British treasury; and of thirty thousand troops from the United Provinces. The total force was expected to number eighty thousand, and Frederic proposed prince Louis of Brunswick as the commander.¹ This prince was a brother of the reigning duke. He served during the war of the Austrian succession in the armies of Maria Theresa, but since 1750 had lived at the Hague, as the confidant and adviser of the widowed stadtholder Anne.² Here his connections enabled him to gather much important information, which

¹ Frederic to the reigning duke of Brunswick, 7 August, 1756. Cf. Frederic's *mémoire* to the English government. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 125.

² Daughter of George the Second of England.

he promptly conveyed, through his brother, or through the Prussian envoy, to Frederic. He had the reputation of a good soldier, and he thoroughly approved Frederic's energetic policy.

This scheme counted in vain, however, on a Dutch contingent, for Holland was lost beyond the power of recovery. When called upon by France in December, 1755, to declare their intentions in the coming struggle, the states, under the influence of the regent and the Orange faction, returned a haughty answer, in which they expressed the hope that the places held by them in the Netherlands would escape insults from the French soldiers, and that the military plans of the most Christian king would not extend to England or Ireland. The meaning of this was that if France made an invasion of the United Kingdom itself, Holland would be obliged to furnish the aid promised in repeated treaties of defensive alliance. England did not, however, wait for this situation to arise. In February, 1756, before any declaration of war, and while hostilities were still confined to the colonies, the British envoy at the Hague demanded of the States the treaty contingent of six thousand men. But public opinion in Holland had in the mean time become aware of the danger to which the policy of the regent was leading; and the rival party, the patriots, as they called themselves, forced the government to change its course. It was urged that England was the aggressor in the quarrel, and had no claim to assistance under the terms of a purely defensive alliance; and, furthermore, that the treaty of mutual guaranty did not extend to the colonies of England, which were as yet the only part of her possessions involved in the conflict. Strict neutrality was, therefore, declared to be the policy of the republic.

This was, however, all that France demanded. She made it easy and profitable for the patriots, who were mainly recruited from the great mercantile aristocracy, by throw-

Neutrality
of Holland.

ing open to their ships the trade with her colonies, which in time of peace was generally forbidden to foreign states. This again aroused England. Vain efforts of Frederic at the Hague. Either out of resentment, or in the hope of bringing Holland to terms, she seized large numbers of Dutch ships trading between French ports ; and her courts of admiralty condemned them as lawful prize. It was declared that a traffic forbidden by the navigation laws of a state to the merchant marine of foreign states in time of peace was not permitted under international law in time of war. The temporary suspension of her general system by France, in order that her commerce might enjoy the protection of a neutral flag, was not therefore binding on England. Dutch ships which attempted to trade between French ports were to be regarded as for the time being part of the commercial marine of France.¹ Frederic, who had had his own quarrel with England over the rights of neutral commerce, was not disposed to support any violent measures or exorbitant claims so long as there was a chance of recovering Holland by milder treatment. At his instance the restoration of the Dutch ships was promised. He urged at the Hague, with all the force which he could command, the danger to the balance of power, to the Protestant religion, to the common interests of the maritime powers, from the Franco-Austrian alliance.² But all these efforts proved fruitless. The patriots were in control of the situation, and the policy of the United Provinces remained unchanged.

In Sweden the perennial struggle between crown and

¹ The famous "Rule of 1756." Vide Wheaton, *Histoire du droit des gens*, Leipsic, 1841, pp. 157, 158 ; Kluit, *Iets over den laatsten Engelschen Oorlog met de Republiek*, etc., Amsterdam, 1794, pp. 4 et seq. ; Flassan, vi. 55-65.

² Frederic to Von der Hellen, 31 July, 3, 10 August ; Mitchell, 23 July, 1756, etc. Bonnac, the French resident at the Hague, was well informed about these efforts. Cf. Stuhr, i. pp. 64-66. Valori asked Frederic for an explanation, but received no satisfaction. *Mémoires*. ii. 148-151.

senate raged with undiminished violence. But the rupture of the Franco-Prussian alliance was followed
 Sweden. by a corresponding change in the policy of France at Stockholm, which gave the balance of power to the oligarchs of the diet. Formerly the king of Prussia, in supporting the cause of the crown, which was the cause of his own sister, had enjoyed the aid of France. Russia encouraged the nobles and the senate. Now, however, French influence was thrown with that of Russia against the king, and the oligarchy triumphed. An alleged conspiracy of those favorable to the crown was the pretext for bloodthirsty reprisals; the royal family was forced to leave the capital; the king was stripped of his constitutional powers; and the aristocratic party in the diet assumed the practical direction of affairs. That Frederic looked with disapproval on some of the measures of the king and queen appears clearly from his own correspondence. His envoy at Stockholm was enjoined to urge moderation upon the court.¹ But any hopes which he may have cherished of effecting a compromise between the rival parties, and securing at least the neutrality of Sweden, were frustrated by the active efforts of French and Russian diplomatists. The nobles were not inclined to abandon the allies who had helped them to victory.

Denmark. Denmark, a state which Frederic wooed at the time with no little fervor, was not torn like Sweden by internal convulsions. Under the mild government of Frederic the Fifth all the arts of peace except economy were cultivated with zeal and success; palaces were built, literature was encouraged, learning was rewarded, and humane measures were taken for the emancipation of the serfs. The author of these measures, count Bernstorff, first minister of the kingdom, was an en-

¹ *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. passim. Schlosser's treatment of this subject, — vol. ii. pp. 319 et seq. — affords an example of his style at its worst.

lightened, sagacious, and prudent statesman. Although he was not able to check the extravagance of the king, which emptied the treasury and rolled up an enormous debt, he managed to keep the country at peace, and thus to avert one favorite form of royal folly. In order that Denmark might remain at peace, he avoided all engagements which were likely to involve her in war. He refused to let her become the tool of French or Russian intrigues. But he also turned a deaf ear to all the glowing appeals or specious insinuations of the other party. Like Holland, the little Baltic kingdom kept its soldiers at home, enjoyed the blessings of peace, and reaped the profits of neutral commerce, while its powerful neighbors were consuming their resources in wars of revenge or ambition or self-defence.

On Saxony, of course, no dependence had ever been placed. Though the elector had not formally adhered to the treaty of St. Petersburg, and was ^{Saxony.} not completely informed about the plans of the two imperial courts, his intentions were certainly not favorable to Prussia, and if pacific were pacific from fear and not from choice. The treaty of Westminster put an end to the negotiations for renewing the subsidy treaty with England. This circumstance gave the Saxon envoy at Paris a cogent reason for urging his government to seek a closer connection with France; while France, now under no obligation to consult the wishes of Frederic, warmly espoused the cause of the imperilled state.¹ For that the first blow of Frederic would fall upon Saxony must have been suspected at Dresden. Brühl's refusal to encourage the negotiations with France² is evidence of his desire not to give Frederic a clear pretext for severe measures, and the disposition made, or making, of the Saxon troops was

¹ Vitzthum, *Geheimnisse*, i. 356 et seq.

² Ibid. i. 370, 371; the reports of Broglie from Dresden, apud Stühr. i. pp. 52-54.

also significant. Under orders they were gradually abandoning the more remote posts, and concentrating on the upper Elbe, near the great fortress of Königstein. Their total numbers were about twenty thousand. Their position was one from which it was doubtless thought they would be able to drive a reasonable bargain with the invader, or effect an easy junction with the Austrians, as the course of events might decide.

Such, then, was the situation. The most that could be expected of England, with Hanover and the German mercenaries, was to hold the French in check on the lower Rhine, and prevent them from sending a force to assist the principal enemies of Prussia. Only a frail and desperate hope remained that Holland and the two Protestant powers of the north could be won. The Saxons would at least have to be disarmed, and might have to be fought. And behind the Saxons stood the two great empires of Russia and Austria, with large armies of disciplined troops which obeyed their orders, and hordes of ferocious irregular soldiery which was ready to answer their call; with rulers of that sex which is least ready to forgive a wrong, — one a depraved and vicious woman, energetic only in her hatreds; the other a virtuous and high-minded princess, who sought first of all the recovery of that of which she felt herself unjustly robbed. Even these were not all the enemies which Frederic had eventually to face. But these were formidable enough to shake the nerves of any but the very strongest man.

This time Frederic did not fall into the error, so common in his earlier wars, of underestimating the strength and intelligence of the enemy. The invasion of Silesia in 1740, the Moravian campaign of 1742, the Bohemian campaign of 1744, were all reckless enterprises, undertaken or conducted in contempt of the enemy, and in defiance of the rules of strategy. In each case the king barely escaped disaster. When

The outlook
for Prussia.

Mental
attitude of
Frederic.

his audacity placed him face to face with a grave crisis, then he first realized the faults and follies of his course. A good observer said of him at this time that his temerity made him despise remote dangers, while his want of firmness made him exaggerate those which drew nearer.¹ "Want of firmness" is indeed not the best term with which to describe the somewhat violent solicitude that Frederic showed when confronted by the consequences of his own rashness, as before Chotusitz in 1742, or when the Austrians invaded the Lausitz in 1745. He was not least firm in the presence of the greatest dangers, even in these earlier years. An alarm not really felt was also sometimes affected to justify a contemplated breach of faith with France. And the king took as distinct and as judicious an account of the value of audacity in the first two wars which he fought, as in the one which he was now about to begin. But after all these qualifications have been made, it remains not less true, and is creditable to Frederic, that he had profited by the lessons of experience, and that he entered upon the third and greatest struggle of his life with a grave and solemn appreciation of its magnitude.

He was not less clearly convinced of the rectitude of his purpose. There was perfect sincerity in the assurances given at the court of Vienna, at the ^{His sincerity.} court of Versailles, and elsewhere, that he had no aggressive plans; that he only asked to live at peace with his neighbors; that if he should be forced to draw the sword, he would draw it only in self-defence. To his favorite sister he wrote that he adopted the course which he did with a conscience free from any reproach, and with a full conviction of the justice of his cause.² In support of this view, he could appeal with confidence to the established

¹ Valori, i. 159.

² Frederic to Wilhelmina, 28 July. See, also, Valori to Bonnac, French envoy at the Hague, 29 July, 1756, apud Stühr, i. 48.

standard of international justice. The conquest of Silesia was an accomplished fact. Its cession to Prussia was solemnly made in treaties; was guaranteed by at least two states which now sought to overthrow it; and at the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was incorporated, as it were, into the public law of Europe. In ethics, it may be that the manner in which the province had been acquired still tainted its title. But this was not the case in law; for the law, indifferent to the circumstances in which a particular territory passes from one state to another, supports the settlements duly made by treaty, and sets up the barrier of recognized facts against the claims of original justice. When it is considered that the plans of the allies went far beyond the recovery of Silesia, the justice of Frederic's cause becomes only the clearer.

In the mean time the answer of the empress-queen was awaited with the keenest anxiety. A second time Klinggræffen had been made a victim of Kaunitz's superior astuteness. When, in accordance with his orders, he asked another audience of the empress-queen, Kaunitz replied that nothing could be gained by a personal interview, and invited him to put his propositions in writing, when they would be laid before her majesty. This was possibly intended only to gain time for military preparations. But Klinggræffen, with a timidity not unnatural on the part of an envoy of Frederic at such a crisis, hesitated to comply, and referred to Berlin for orders. The answer was a rebuke of the most emphatic kind. The envoy's stupidity, Frederic wrote, had put everything in jeopardy. He had sacrificed valuable time. He was at once to present the Prussian demands in writing, if that form was preferred, and have the reply at Berlin by the twenty-first of the month.¹

The question of peace or war was thus, in point of

¹ Klinggræffen, 7 August; Frederic to Klinggræffen, 13 August; to Schwerin, 14 August, 1756.

form, still an open one, depending on the answer of Maria Theresa to Frederic's ultimatum. But the military orders which issued from Berlin or Potsdam ^{Peace or war?} pointed distinctly to war.¹ The regiments which were nearest the Saxon frontier received more detailed instructions for an eventual campaign. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick was to collect the taxes due to the treasury of the elector when, in pursuance of the plan of operations, he should occupy the city of Leipsic. New regiments were ordered to Silesia, and to the active army in southern Prussia. The letters of Frederic to the princes of the royal house, and to other private correspondents, expressed no hope of a peaceful solution. Every preparation was made for war; and although the diplomacy of Frederic had in view the chances of a favorable reply from Vienna, the military orders seemed to assume the probability of a reply which would make war inevitable.²

On the twentieth of August Klinggræffen finally presented in writing the substance of Frederic's demands. His note asserted first the alleged ^{Second Austrian declaration.} fact that the two imperial courts had formed an offensive alliance for attacking Prussia the following year, and then, in obedience to the orders of Frederic, demanded a categorical promise not to make such an attack either in 1756 or in 1757. But Kaunitz had had ample time to prepare the reply, which he at once handed to the envoy. "His Prussian majesty had been long engaged in making preparations for war, on a large scale, and to the prejudice of the public repose," said the document, "when, on the twenty-sixth of July, he thought proper to question the empress-queen about her own military precautions, which had, however, been taken only in consequence

¹ Arneth, iv. 481, errs, however, in saying that Frederic's own words show that he was resolved on war in any event. They show rather that he was anxious not to have war, if it could be avoided.

² See the various letters and orders in *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 237-279.

of his own measures. These facts are known to all Europe. The empress could therefore have refused to explain objects which were notorious, and needed no explanation. But she at once declared to M. de Klinggraeffen, in the audience of the twenty-sixth of July, 'that the critical state of affairs forced her to regard the measures taken as necessary for her security, and that of her allies, measures which tended to the prejudice of nobody.' Her majesty is doubtless entitled to form such a judgment as she pleases of the circumstances of the time, and it belongs to her alone to determine their dangers. For the rest, her declaration is so clear, that she is unable to imagine how any one could find it obscure. Accustomed to receive and observe the regards due between sovereigns, she could not learn except with surprise and pain the contents of the memorial of the twentieth of August. That paper is of such a nature, both in substance and in language, that the empress-queen would be compelled to pass the bounds of moderation if she should reply to all that it contains. But she is still willing to declare to M. de Klinggraeffen 'that the information which has been given to the king of Prussia of an offensive alliance against him on the part of the empress-queen and the empress of Russia, as well as of the circumstances and stipulations of such pretended alliance, is absolutely false and groundless. Such a treaty does not exist, and never has existed.' This declaration will enable the world to judge of the nature and quality of the unfortunate events which the Prussian note announces, and to see that in no case can they be charged to the empress-queen. This is what her majesty has ordered to be made known to M. de Klinggraeffen in reply to his memoir."¹

The existence of such an alliance as Klinggraeffen's note assumed was thus unconditionally denied ; and tech-

¹ Réponse au mémoire présenté par M. de Klinggraeffen, 20 August, 1756. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 285 et seq.

nically, though only technically, this position was correct.¹ There undoubtedly was no offensive alliance between Austria and Russia. Frederic's contention, which took account of the substance and meaning rather than the text and form of the treaty of 1746, was unfounded, and he had committed a tactical error, of which Kaunitz promptly took advantage. But when the Austrian reply rested there, and refused to give any assurance for the future, he was justified in saying that the essential part of his inquiry, the question whether he was to be left in peace for the twelve months next to come, still remained unanswered.

This view of the case he laid down in a series of notes or comments on Kaunitz's answer, adding at the end what he called, with a curious touch of the Frederic's comments. pedantry which he often showed at the most solemn moments, a peroration. The peroration was a spirited defence of his course in appealing to arms. First giving himself the benefit of the familiar distinction between the nominal and the real aggressor, between him who begins and him who provokes a war, he charged upon the court of Vienna the deliberate purpose to overthrow treaties guaranteed by all the powers of Europe, and to destroy the constitution of the German Empire. "But the king," he continued, writing in the third person, "declares that the liberties of Germany shall perish only with the ruin of Prussia. His majesty calls Heaven to witness, that after exhausting all proper means to save the Empire and his own states from the scourge of war, he sees himself forced to take up arms in order to oppose a plot formed against his kingdom; that, after his efforts at conciliation have gone to the length of making the empress-queen the arbiter of peace or war, he now departs from the path of moderation only because moderation ceases to be a virtue when it is a question of defending his honor, his independence, his country, and his crown."²

¹ Even Arneth, iv. 484, concedes this.

² *Rémarques sur la réponse de la cour de Vienne. Polit. Corresp.,*

Since Frederic's plan included a possible invasion of Saxon territory, it was deemed wise to make explanations to the court of Dresden. The Prussian envoy was therefore directed to ask an audience of the elector, and to represent that the hostile schemes of the empress-queen made such a measure necessary. Strict discipline would be maintained; and every possible consideration would be shown to the royal family and the people of the country. But it ought to cause no surprise that Prussia found it necessary to take precautions against a repetition of the experiences of 1744 and 1745.¹

Were such precautions required, however, by any probable danger from the policy of the Saxon court? The withdrawal of the troops from the exposed points near the Prussian frontier might of course indicate a plan, as was above suggested, to unite them with the Austrians for a common cause of action; but it sprang in the first instance from an undoubted sense of fear, and clearly showed at least that there was no intention to oppose the first march of the invader. The formal adhesion of Saxony to the Austro-Russian treaty of 1746 was still withheld. But is it also true that August and Brühl had simply refused to commit themselves in writing out of deference to France and fear of Prussia, while secretly encouraging the imperial courts in all their worst designs? Or were they at heart opposed to the policy only half concealed in the treaty, without daring to make their opposition open and final? An affirmative answer to the first of these two questions is given by Frederic himself in his published works; by the manifestoes issued in the name of the Prussian government; by Carlyle, whose point of view permitted no other; by all

xiii. 285-291. The full text of the Austrian note, with the Rémarques, was ordered to be communicated at Paris and London.

¹ Frederic to Maltzahn, 26 August. Cf. Frederic to Michell, 27 August, 1756.

Notice to
Saxony.

Dresden,
Vienna, and
St. Peters-
burg.

who write under the influence of Berlin; and by the great majority of European critics, because they regard the Prussian case as the most strongly fortified by documentary evidence. For over a century, it may be said, this answer was given by historical writers of nearly every nationality, even by those who had the deepest abhorrence of Frederic's character, policy, and measures. The opposite opinion was long without defenders of equal rank with those who took the side of Prussia. But it has lately found them in Arneth, whose diligence and candor rarely fail, and in the very able though unnecessarily diffuse and aggressive work, above cited, by a student of the Saxon archives.¹ Which of these two parties has the truth on its side?

To this question an absolute and decisive answer cannot be given, in spite of the mass of material furnished by the archives, except by one who has the power to divine the secret wishes of August and his ministers. But the realm of speculative metaphysics lies outside that of history. The concrete evidence seems to me to give considerable support to Frederic's contention that Saxony was practically in the plot against Prussia, although timidity kept her from giving in her formal adhesion, and prudence taught her not to put even her secret desires in writing. It is probable, however, that Frederic somewhat overrated the importance of Saxony's part in the hostile intrigues. Obtaining most of his information from the archives of Dresden, and from the reports of the envoys of August at Vienna and St. Petersburg, he was tempted to make Saxony the centre of the plot, and therefore the first object of his resentment. Maria Theresa he knew had not yet reconciled herself to the loss of Silesia. Elizabeth he had offended both personally and politically; and she thirsted for revenge. But the hostile sentiments of the two empresses

Views and
intentions
of Saxony.

¹ Vitzthum, *Geheimnisse des sächsischen Cabinets*.

were, he believed, artfully encouraged by Brühl for the purpose of bringing on a conflict in which Prussia would be crushed by overwhelming numbers, while Saxony, without giving much aid or taking any risks, would receive a large share of the common spoils. This view is also not absolutely discredited by the published evidence. Many circumstances seem indeed to support it.¹ But the best conclusion which I have been able to draw from the material at command is that Saxony's part in the projects of the two imperial courts, though friendly and sympathetic, was passive rather than active, — that of a timid maiden, rather than an ardent suitor. The real centre of the plots against Prussia was the court of Vienna.

It may be presumed that Frederic gave all these considerations their proper weight, but when the critical moment arrived his decision was promptly formed. The dispatch of Klinggraeffen, with the evasive reply of the Austrian court, was received by Frederic the evening of the twenty-fifth of August. The next day marching orders were issued to the troops.² It was Frederic's plan to have the several detachments of the army in such a state of preparation, and so well concentrated, that the forward movement could begin two days and the Saxon frontier be crossed three days later. The march was to be in three columns, converging toward and uniting at Dresden. Together they were to number sixty-five thousand men. If he should meet no resistance from the Saxons at Pirna, he intended to pass the mountains into Bohemia as far as Melnik, the head of navigation on the Elbe. There, having the river behind him, he would be sure of provisions and the necessary stores, and could safely winter in the enemy's country. The Austrians, he thought, would throw themselves into Prague, without a

¹ Vide *Résolutions et instructions pour le comte de Vicedom et le sieur de Petzold à St. Pétersbourg*, 23 May, 1747, in Hertzberg's *Recueil*, or *Œuvres de Frédéric*, vol. iv.

² *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 280 et seq.

battle ; but if they should attempt to invade Silesia, he could send a detachment to reënforce Schwerin. His reason for marching through Saxony, and not by way of Silesia, was that the latter route would permit the enemy to get between him and his capital. The plan which he chose would enable him to cover Berlin, and even, in case of need, to reach a helping hand to Hanover.¹ To complete the preparations, orders were issued to the minister Borcke in regard to the contribution to be levied in Saxony. This was fixed at five million thalers, about one million less than the annual revenues of the elector. All other requisitions, as of forage, provisions, and the like, were to be deducted from this amount, and only the residue collected in money, by a single uniform tax, assessed as fairly as possible. But while the payments to the Saxony treasury were thus suspended, there was to be no interference with the ordinary life and affairs of the people. Every effort should be made to reassure them.²

Full instructions were also issued for the conduct of the foreign office during the absence of the king. These described the attitude to observe toward The foreign office. the various courts, and repeatedly enjoined the most earnest efforts to convince the Protestant powers that Prussia was the champion of their religion, and deserved their assistance. At the end of the paper the principal objects of policy were recapitulated. The first was to induce Holland to enter the alliance, and add her troops to the army of Hanover ; the second, to prove to France that the charges and insinuations of Austria were maliciously false ; the third, to provoke the rupture of the Polish diet.³

¹ Mitchell, 27 August, 1756. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 296, 297.

² Instruction vor den Etats- und dirigirenden minister von Boreke wegen der Direction, so er in Sachsen über die dort eingehende Contributiones wahren den Kriegen haben soll. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 302-304.

³ Instruction vor die minister vom Departement der auswärtigen Affairen, 27 August, 1756. *Polit. Corresp.*, xiii. 299-302.

The king's conduct toward England during the few days which preceded the crisis was marked by great loyalty, and even great cordiality. He expressed his thanks for the action of the ministry in refusing to receive the Russian note limiting the stipulated assistance to the case of aggressive measures on the part of Prussia, though he first learned of such action indirectly, and some five months after it was taken.¹ He even offered to spare ten thousand Prussian troops temporarily for service in Westphalia against the French.² This offer was made, too, at a time when Frederic had just received another warning from Paris, given by Rouillé to Knyphausen, that an attack on the empress-queen would require France to furnish the aid promised in the treaty of Versailles.³ The report of Knyphausen was by Frederic's orders at once communicated to Mitchell.⁴

The day after the receipt of the second answer from Vienna, Frederic had another important interview with Mitchell. His purpose was now formed. Notwithstanding the arguments for delay which England continued to press up to the last moment,⁵ he insisted that the state of affairs left him no choice; the issue must be faced. He was anxious, he said, for peace. If the Austrian note had contained any declaration of the kind he required, any assurance for his safety, he would have been satisfied. But he had read the note carefully several times in search of such an assurance, and had found none. Though he had ordered his troops to march on the morrow, he had shown proof of his moderation by giving the empress-queen still another chance to remove

Frederic's
attitude
toward
England.

Third Prus-
sian inquiry.

¹ Frederic to Mitchell, 17 August, 1756. The declaration was returned in March.

² Mitchell's report, 19 August; Frederic to Mitchell, same date.

³ Knyphausen, 8 August, 1756. There were no secret articles, unknown to the king of Prussia, said Rouillé, which was false.

⁴ Eichel to Podewils, 18 August, 1756.

⁵ Vide Holdernessee to Mitchell, in Raumer, *Beitrdge*, ii. 388.

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